■ BUSINESS/B1

Gov't readies sale between March and May of RPN 9, IBC 13

■ METRO/A15

Former lover claims Plinky Recto needs 'psychiatric help'

■ BUSINESS/B3

Peso poised to break P51:$1, closes at P52.425

■ WORLD/A8

200 feared dead in landslides in Indon's Central Java

Muñoz-Palma: Her words now enshrined in history

A HABITUAL DISSENTER WHO TOOK EVERY opportunity to challenge martial law.

An "ingrate" who wore the epithet like a badge of courage.

These were only two of the accolades heaped on retired Justice Cecilia Muñoz Palma by her colleagues and admirers during her lifetime.

MUÑOZ-PALMA/ A7

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Defensor: From 'Spice Boy' to 'Superboy' to 'Powerpuff'

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

YUNG MALAPIT SA MGA BOTANTE SIYEMPRE!

FROM "SPICE BOY" to "Superboy" to "Powerpuff" secretary?

President Macapagal-Arroyo is reportedly planning to move her fa-

DEFENSOR/ A6

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Thursday, January 5, 2006 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 28 P18
website: www.inq7.net

Cory-FVR-Erap alliance sought

United Opposition pressing proposal

WHAT, US WORRY? President Arroyo and Vice President Noli de Castro put in a cheerful appearance at the inauguration of Globe Asaitique Tower 1 in Mandaluyong City on Wednesday as the hot talk of the town (again!) turns to doomsday coup plots. LYN RILLON

By Norman Bordadora

HAVING FAILED TO oust President Macapagal-Arroyo through street protests and by impeachment, opposition forces are moving to get three former Presidents—Corazon Aquino, Fidel Ramos and Joseph Estrada—to form an alliance that would compel the incumbent to step down.

"We, in the United Opposition (UNO), believe that a meeting of the three former Presidents will be a big help to the opposition," Estrada's former Agrarian Secretary Horacio Morales told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Morales said the proposal to have Ramos, Aquino and Estrada together was made during a meeting of the UNO—an umbrella of various opposition groups—in the middle of December.

Such a "Big 3" meeting could take place if Ramos and Aquino could pay Estrada a visit at his resthouse in Tanay, Rizal, where the ousted President is under house arrest on charges of plunder.

Estrada is held under strict security regulations which bar him from holding political meetings and giving media interviews while in detention.

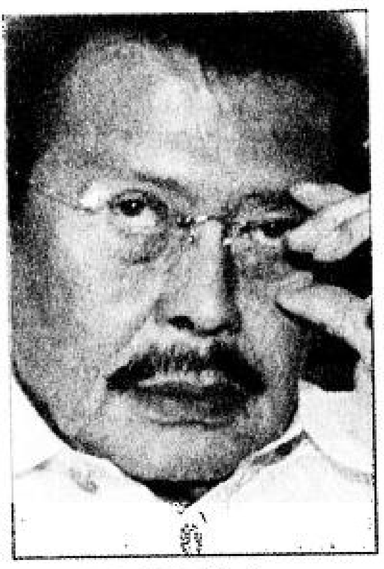
"Of course, one can't remove the rights of Presidents Ramos and Aquino to pay President Estrada a visit," Morales added.

Morales said it was a good

CORY/ A7

AQUINO: Constitutional way

RAMOS: Monumental blunder



ESTRADA: Unfinished term

Palace belittles coup talk: We have undiminished faith in the Armed Forces

By Christine O. Avendaño, TJ Burgonio and Philip C. Tubeza

WITH HER FAITH IN THE MILITARY "undiminished," President Macapagal-Arroyo downplayed renewed threats of a coup and rumors that former President Fidel Ramos was withdrawing support from her.

Coup rumors intensified this week with the revelation that Ramos met secretly on Jan. 2 with Senate President Franklin Drilon, who has called on Ms Arroyo to step down, and former Sen. Vicente Sotto III, a friend of detained former President Joseph Estrada's.

The former President's declaration of support for Ms Arroyo in July last year was regarded as a key factor that saved her administration from collapse amid mounting calls for her to step down.

But he rejected last month as a "monumental blunder" a proposal by the Consultative Commission, a body formed by Malacañang, to scrap the 2007 elections.

Ramos threatened to withdraw support from Ms Arroyo unless she declared by Jan. 1 that she was against the proposal.

"We have undiminished faith in the professional loyalty of the (Armed Forces) and the full capacity of the command to deal with these controversies," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in a statement.

Bunye said rumors of a coup could be set aside, "as the discipline and morale of our troops is high and the chain of command, solid."

His comments came after Air Force Col. Efren Daquil told reporters at a press conference Tuesday that he had been approached thrice by disgruntled military officers to join a coup.

Daquil said he had turned the

PALACE/ A7

PAF colonel turns himself in day after blasting superiors

By Nikko Dizon

COL. EFREN DAQUIL YESTERDAY turned himself in a day after exposing alleged corruption in the Philippine Air Force amid a charge that he was being used "wittingly or unwittingly" by forces seeking the ouster of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Daquil, a former deputy wing commander of the elite PAF 710th Special Operations Wing based in Clark, Pampanga, arrived shortly before 11 a.m. at Villamor Air Base, the PAF headquarters. He was accompanied by his lawyer, Homobono Adaza.

Daquil was met by his immedi-

PAF COLONEL/ A6

'He abandoned me and our children'

By Nikko Dizon

DEFINITELY NOT A REFORMIST.

As far as the estranged wife of Air Force Col. Efren Daquil is concerned, the public should know the truth about this officer who recently bared alleged anomalies within the military branch.

Asked if her husband's exposé showed that he was a reformist, Emi Daquil could only shake her head to say, "No."

"This is difficult because I am washing our dirty linen in public, but all I am after is the truth," a dejected Emi said in an interview with reporters yesterday.

An attractive and petite 50-

HE ABANDONED/ A6

Standing only 5'4", Daquil always wants to stand tall

By Alcuin Papa

ONE OF THE SMALLEST MILITARY officers at 5'4", Efren Daquil always wanted to stand tall. A classmate in the Philippine Military Academy remembers Daquil as a gutsy cadet who probed the limits of what he could do.

The 54-year-old Daquil was one who would "take life" the most—a term used in the academy for one who tested the threshold of PMA rules and traditions.

Cadets like him usually made the best field officers.

A boxer during his plebe days,

STANDING/ A6

RP cashing in on medical tourism boom

By Christian V. Esguerra

A NEW KIDNEY WOULD SAVE AN ARAB man's life so he went to the Philippines. Not as urgent, an American girl wanting bigger breasts arrived here, too. So did a Korean girl who wanted her eyes bigger and more expressive.

Driven by different medical reasons, foreigners like them have been steadily coming to the country as part of the Philippine Medical Tourism Program started just two years ago.

They come mainly because treatment is much cheaper here than in their respective countries like the United States, according to Undersecretary Jade del Mundo, the Department of Health's pointman on the new program.

Visitors usually seek cosmetic procedures which are mainly available at the Belo Medical Center and Calayan Service Center.

Both clinics fall under the "ambulatory centers" included in the program. They also include the American Eye Center, Asian Eye Institute, and RX Pinoy, a group of doctors in-

RP CASHING IN/ A5

How a 'kaingin' farmer became 'Dr. Luis'

MEDICAL KITS, CERTIFICATES OF COMPLETION and "new titles" as "doctors" are given 32 tribal leaders from all over the country who went through a three-week rigorous training program for community health workers conducted by the Foundation of Our Lady of Peace Mission Inc. in Parañaque. EDWIN BACASMAS

By Jerry E. Esplanada

A FEW WEEKS AGO, A MANGYAN-Tadyawan slash-and-burn farmer returned to his village in the hinterlands of Gloria, Oriental Mindoro, from a sojourn in Manila.

Luis Ambo Midru, 35, was a new man. Speaking in Filipino, he told the INQUIRER: "I've become famous in [my village of] Manguyang because of this trip. And my having stayed in Manila for three long weeks will surely make me more popular."

On top of all that, Midru brought home with him a "special title."

"People now call me 'Dr. Luis,' which I think sounds good. Better than 'Luis, the *kaingin* farmer,'" he said, laughing.

Midru, along with 32 other tribal leaders from various parts of the country, had just hurdled a demanding three-week training program for community health workers, or "barefoot doctors."

They learned about first aid, health care, basic human anatomy and physiology, nutrition and hygiene, maternal and child care, common diseases and injuries, herbal medicine and reflexology, among others.

The training program is a project of the Foundation of Our Lady of Peace Mission Inc. (Folpmi), a medical charity institution

HOW A/ A5

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao will have cloudy skies with rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. There will be frequent rains over the eastern and southern sections. Bicol and Eastern Visayas will have mostly cloudy skies with rainshowers. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

COMPILED BY: CYRIL L. BONABENTE, PDI RESEARCH/01/05/06 SOURCE: PAGASA

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONTPAGE

Text us your feedback: inquirer news name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

12 killed in two road accidents in La Union

AT LEAST 12 PEOPLE, INCLUDing a woman and her five sons, were killed in two road accidents in northern Luzon, police said yesterday.

Nine of the fatalities were aboard a truck that overturned after it was hit head-on by a bigger truck, which swerved from the opposite lane after one of its tires blew out on a highway in Bauang town in La Union province on Tuesday, said Bauang police chief Superintendent Pedro Ubaldo.

Ubaldo said among those killed were a 44-year-old woman and her five sons, ages 7 to 25. Two other relatives and the truck driver also died, and three others were in critical condition at a hospital.

The family was returning to Bauang, from nearby Naguilian town where they delivered a cargo of planters made from old tires, Ubaldo said.

One of the front tires of a 22-wheel trailer-truck blew out, causing the driver to lose control and swerve into the opposite lane, hitting the smaller truck. The driver of the larger vehicle was injured, Ubaldo said.

Earlier in the day, a car slammed into a parked minibus on the same road, killing the driver, his mother and an aunt, and injured four other occupants, Ubaldo said.

He said the family was heading home after spending the Christmas and New Year's holidays in Cavite province, south of Manila.

No passengers were aboard the bus at the time. *AP*

LYN RILLON

SOGGY DEEDS

Records officer Marilou Ibana clips land title certificates on a clothesline after the Register of Deeds at the provincial capitol in Calapan, Oriental Mindoro, was submerged in floodwaters on Dec. 19. She said at least 20,000 certificates were submerged.

GIs' motions stall arrest warrants

By Tonette Orejas and Ansbert Joaquin
PDI Central Luzon Desk

OLONGAPO CITY – THE ARREST OF FOUR American soldiers charged with raping a 22-year-old Filipino woman would not happen soon, at least not within the next two weeks, according to the judge who will try the case.

Judge Renato Dilag told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview yesterday he would first have to resolve six motions filed separately by the lawyers of Staff Sgt. Chad Brian Carpentier and Lance Corporals Daniel Smith, Keith Silkwood and Dominic Duplantis, and their Filipino driver, Timoteo Soriano Jr.

"These pleadings should first be resolved before we can issue a warrant of arrest," Dilag said.

Dilag, who presides over the Regional Trial Court Branch 73 here, said the motions, either seeking judicial determination of probable cause or a stay on the arrest of the five accused, are due for a first hearing on Friday.

He said the hearings would take "a few days" and would require him to adjust the 10-day timetable he is allowed by law to conduct an arraignment, he said. Arraignment is the formal judicial process where charges are read to the accused in open court after which they are asked to enter a plea of "guilty" or "not guilty."

Probable cause

Dilag said the arrest warrants should be issued before the arraignment. He said he would ask the Department of Foreign Affairs to serve the warrants if he found probable cause for ordering the soldiers' arrest.

He said he would need time to review the records of the case, which stemmed from the alleged Nov. 1, 2005, rape at the Subic Bay Freeport, and study the Dec. 27 Olongapo City prosecutor's resolution charging the five men with rape with conspiracy.

Dilag said he would require the five accused and the complainant to appear before his court during the arraignment. The accused and the complainant have yet to face each other following the incident.

"I will see to it that all arguments should be in by Friday so that I can resolve this by the following week," he said.

City Prosecutor Prudencio Jalandoni yesterday prepared a motion seeking custody of the soldiers, who are with the US Embassy.

"Logically, what we need now is for the transfer of custody from the United States authorities to Philippine authorities. Our message here is that we really want to assert the authority of the Philippine government to ensure that justice will be given to the victim," Jalandoni said.

'Due process'

The motions filed by the accused were "part of due process" and "a legal option" for the defense, the judge said.

As to his not being authorized to try the case on the account of his being the judge of a special family court, Dilag said: "Republic Act 8369 or the law creating the family courts allows us [judges of special courts] to handle other cases."

Lawyer John Coluso, counsel for Silkwood and Duplantis, said it was one of his options to study if Dilag was indeed authorized to try the case.

"It would be to the detriment of everyone if in the end it is found out that he's not authorized. If that is so, his decision may not be legally binding," Coluso said.

Lawyer Francisco Rodrigo, who represents Carpentier, said he would not contest Dilag's authority to handle the case because RA 8369 allows family court judges to handle cases other than those falling under their exclusive jurisdiction.

Lawyer Benjamin Formoso said he would study the matter. "We'd like to focus on the merits of the case," he said.

Formoso maintained that his client, Smith, who has been tagged as the one who allegedly had sex with the woman, was innocent.

He said Smith told him on Tuesday that he was not scared to be arrested because he wanted to clear himself.

No exemption

The women's group Gabriela yesterday hailed an earlier statement by Dilag that his court would demand custody over the US servicemen but it voiced doubt he would have his way because of alleged pressure from the Department of Justice and the Visiting Forces Agreement Commission.

"We are one with (Judge Dilag's) position that the Philippine's judicial process should prevail over the provisions of the (VFA) and that the four US Marines… should not be exempted from the process just because of the VFA," said Emmi de Jesus, Gabriela secretary general.

"But (we are keeping our fingers) crossed on whether he could actually assert the court's claim for physical custody over the suspects as the custody matter could even be considered wishful thinking in the light of pressures put on him and the judicial process by the Philippine government particularly the DOJ and the VFAComm," she added.

Still, Gabriela urged Dilag not to be affected by the pronouncements of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzales and Zosimo Paredes, who heads the VFAComm.

Meanwhile, Gonzalez told reporters yesterday he supported Dilag's insistence on taking custody of the accused American soldiers as this would prove the Philippines' "manhood."

"By insisting on physical custody and by demanding for it, that will prove that we want to assert our sovereignty especially in criminal cases and maybe that will prove our manhood in the international community," he said.

"It must be stressed… that any disagreement regarding custody must still be resolved at the diplomatic level in order not to strain the friendly relations between the Philippines and the United States," Gonzalez said, quoting from a Jan. 3 memo he said he wrote Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita on the VFA's provisions. *With reports from Norman Bordadora and Leila B. Salaverria*

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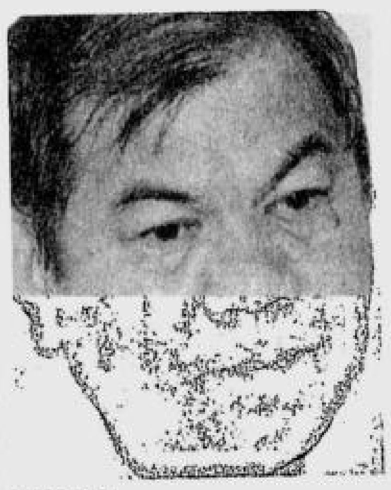
Garcia conviction caught in bureaucratic review

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan



GARCIA

FOR ALL THEIR VAUNTED swiftness, it turns out that the wheels of military justice are as exceedingly slow as their civilian counterparts. Last month's "guilty" verdict on the former military chief comptroller, retired Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, has been fed to the mills of a lengthy and laborious review process with no clear indication when it would be deemed final and executory.

After a year-long trial, a military court pronounced Garcia guilty of conduct unbecoming an officer last Dec. 2 for undeclared wealth and being a permanent resident of the United States. It sentenced him to two years of hard labor and dishonorable dismissal.

As in all court-martial proceedings, the ruling has been forwarded to Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga for approval. And this is where the next episode in the long tale of corruption in the military and the top brass' avowals to end it begins.

After being reviewed by the Staff Judge Advocate in the office of the Chief of Staff, the case moves on to the Board of Review, then to the Judge Advocate General's Office before a recommendation is submitted to Senga.

Senga can reverse or modify the decision before submitting it to the President, who, as Commander in Chief, can also reverse or modify it. There is no appeal to the civilian courts.

"We have to be very careful about this," Senga told reporters recently. "We have to be very sure about our recommendation to the President."

Malacañang has already hailed Garcia's conviction, with Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye saying it "sends a strong signal that any misconduct in our military will not be countenanced."

Senga said he has not imposed any deadline for the military to complete its review.

"We will let you know in due time," he said.

Meanwhile, Garcia remains detained at the Philippine National Police Custodial Center while undergoing trial by the Sandiganbayan for plunder and perjury. Plunder is considered a heinous offense punishable by death.

Garcia, who is the highest military official convicted by a court-martial, has been detained since November 2004.

The court-martial handed down its verdict just a little over a year after the start of the trial, which stemmed from allegations Garcia had illegally amassed wealth while he was deputy chief of staff for comptrollership (J-6) from 2001 to 2004.

The court upheld charges that Garcia did not declare in his statement of assets and liabilities for 2002 and 2003 up to P12.3 million in savings deposited in the Armed Forces and Police Savings and Loan Association Inc. (AFPSLAI) as well as six motor vehicles registered in his wife's name.

But the court acquitted him of charges he did not declare millions more in peso and dollar accounts in seven banks on grounds the prosecution had failed to prove Garcia owned them.

2 sequestered TV stations up for sale

THE GOVERNMENT WILL PRIVATIZE TWO sequestered television stations in the first half of the year, the government's Privatization and Management Office (PMO) said yesterday.

The sale of IBC-13 and RPN-9 television stations will take place separately between March and May, the PMO said in a statement, naming CLSA Exchange Capital Inc. as its lead advisor in the sale.

It did not say how much the government expects from the sale but the finance department has said that it has set a conservative target of P500 million in revenue from privatizing state assets this year.

It raised about P8.3 billion from asset sales in 2005. *AFP*

NBI bares confession in judge's slay

By Margaux C. Ortiz
and Luige A. del Puerto

A SUSPECT IN THE AMBUSH-slay of Pasay City Judge Henrick Gingoyon has executed an extrajudicial confession "specifying their roles and naming other personalities involved" in the assassination, the National Bureau of Investigation said yesterday.

Ana Labao, the NBI special investigator with the Task Force Gingoyon, has however withheld the identity of the confessed suspect, saying they were still "validating" each of his and the other suspects' roles and participation in the crime.

NBI officer in charge Nestor Mantaring has disclosed that the agency would file murder charges against Rodolfo Cuer, the alleged gunman, Mark Datas, the driver of the getaway vehicle, Said Sulayman, the man who allegedly contracted the job and paid the suspects, Rodolfo Baclor, the alleged "spotter" and several other John Does.

Labao said the NBI has detained additional suspects, "who are still undergoing an elimination process."

No motive

"We are now conducting further investigation and follow-up operations to identify the mastermind behind the killing," said Ruel Lasala, the chief of the NBI National Capital Region.

Labao said the suspects were promised P150,000 for the job and were given an initial P50,000 as down payment. *(See related story on Page A13)*

Police officials meanwhile said they have yet to establish a motive or pinpoint the mastermind behind the killing.

In a teleconference, a police official said the interrogation of the nine who have been detained and the investigation have only succeeded in identifying the gunman and the other "ground players" but not the one who paid them to carry out the assassination.

"Of course, there was planning involved, and we need to find out who [planned it]. As to the motive, these men are guns for hire," said Sr. Supt. Benjardi Mantele, head of the Cavite Police.

Playing billiards

Labao said witnesses have positively identified Cuer as the gunman who shot the Pasay judge at 12:45 p.m. last Dec. 31 while Gingoyon was walking toward his house in Soldiers Hills Village, Barangay Molino, Bacoor, Cavite from a nearby gym.

"Witnesses also saw the suspects playing billiards in the gym a few hours before the incident," Labao said in a phone interview.

According to the NBI investigation, at about 10 a.m. that day, the alleged "spotter" Baclor played billiards at the ground floor of the gym and then went up to the second floor at 11:30 a.m. to inquire about gym registration fees.

Baclor then took a look at the logbook. On seeing Gingoyon's name, he asked the gym owner who the judge was.

When the gym owner greeted Gingoyon when he arrived for his work-out, Baclor left the building to allegedly inform his accomplices of the judge's whereabouts.

Labao said Cuer and Datas were both seen playing billiards at the gym between 11:50 a.m. and 12:20 p.m.

Getaway bike

A blue Yamaha motorcycle, which witnesses have identified as the getaway vehicle, was seen parked at a distance.

When Gingoyon left the gym at 12:30 p.m., the suspects allegedly tailed him home.

Cuer, who was seen wearing a black jacket and shirt, denim shorts and a bull cap, allegedly shot the judge 150 meters away from his house, hitting the right lower portion of his body.

Labao said the suspect shot Gingoyon three more times after he fell down, hitting him on the chest and lower lip.

The gunman then escaped with the other suspect on the motorcycle. Four empty shells were recovered from the scene.

The judge was brought to the Molino Doctors' Hospital and Imus Medical Center where he was declared dead on arrival, Labao said.

Labao said the suspects who were simultaneously arrested by a joint NBI and police team at their respective homes in Cavite yesterday morning were notorious for being involved in a string of robbery cases in Cavite.

"We have recovered some firearms which we have submitted for ballistics examination," the NBI agent said, adding that investigators were also able to recover a motorcycle helmet from the crime scene.

Documentation

As of press time, the Cavite police were still finalizing the documents needed to file the charges.

But the inquiry has not ended, other angles have not been disregarded, Mantele said.

"They (suspects) have not yet said who was the mastermind. Special police work would be needed for that," he said.

"We have not determined who paid them, but we'll get there," he added.

Mantele also said as of now, investigators have nothing to link a ranking police officer based in Camp Crame to the murder.

Sr. Supt. Manuel Barcena, the implicated officer, admitted his long-running disputes with Gingoyon on Tuesday but maintained that his feud with the judge was confined to the courtroom. He categorically denied any hand in the killing.

Mantele said the suspects had not mentioned Barcena's name during the interrogation.

Police spokesperson Chief Supt. Leopoldo Batoail said there is no need to restrict Barcena's movements.

The police take his word that he would make himself available in case he is summoned by investigators, Bataoil said.

"The chief PNP (Director General Arturo Lomibao) has urged him to make himself available, and he himself has said he'd do just that," Bataoil said.

PHANTOM AT THE RUINS
Happyland, Tondo is anything but happy as a masked boy stares at the camera while trying to salvage whatever he can find in the ashes. Fire gutted homes in the area on New Year's Eve and left hundreds of residents homeless going into the new year. REM ZAMORA

Gov't starts moving in on Luisita despite appeal

By Blanche S. Rivera

DESPITE A PENDING APPEAL FROM THE owners of Hacienda Luisita, the government has officially started the process of acquiring for distribution the 4,915-hectare sugar estate owned by the family of former President Corazon C. Aquino.

The Department of Agrarian Reform has issued notices of coverage to the Hacienda Luisita Inc., initiating the tedious process of distributing the Cojuangco estate to its farm workers under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

The government wants the acquisition and distribution of Luisita to be completed by May 31, according to a timetable set by Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman.

The HLI has petitioned the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council to reconsider the PARC's decision to revoke the estate's 16-year-old stock distribution option scheme which made the farm workers part owners of the corporation managing the estate instead of acquiring the land for themselves.

The PARC decision, handed down last month, paved the way for the government's placing the estate under the coverage of the CARP and distributing the land to the farmers.

The DAR issued four notices of coverage, starting on Jan. 2, for each of the four titles covering the Hacienda Luisita. The notices, signed by DAR Tarlac provincial agrarian reform officer Alfredo D. Reyes, were sent to the HLI office in Makati City on Jan. 3.

"Only the Supreme Court can stop the coverage, although we may have to slow down if the PARC says so," said Narciso Nieto, the DAR undersecretary for operations.

Nieto, however, expressed confidence that the PARC, the highest governing body on agrarian reform, would act speedily to resolve the motion for reconsideration filed by HLI.

Pangandaman has also created six special teams comprising 39 people to oversee the acquisition and distribution of the Hacienda Luisita.

The special operations team headed by Nieto will be in charge of documentation, information dissemination, ocular inspection of the lands, and the screening of farm worker beneficiaries and overall monitoring of the CARP coverage of Luisita.

Nieto said the HLI would retain five hectares of the estate, the biggest area to have been covered by a stock distribution scheme.

"A corporation is treated as a juridical person, so the HLI can retain only five hectares as owner of the land," Nieto said.

The HLI can choose which area it wants to retain by submitting a sketch of the area to the DAR provincial office within 30 days. If it fails to state its preference, the DAR would assign the area for retention.

Sandigan finds 4 guilty of graft

By Nelson F. Flores

THE SANDIGANBAYAN FOURTH DIVISION yesterday sentenced four officials of the Tacloban City-based National Maritime Polytechnic (NMP) to nine years in prison after they were found guilty of graft for their involvement in a land acquisition anomaly in 1996.

Convicted were NMP executive director Renato B. Palomo, administrative officer Benjamin A. Umipig, chief accountant Margie C. Mabitad and budget officer Carmencita Fonatanilla-Payabyab.

The four NMP officials were also ordered to indemnify the government the amount of P8.91 million.

The court also issued arrest warrants for Glenn B. Solis and Teresita Jimenez-Trinidad, who acted as sellers of the property. The two remain at large.

In its 22-page decision, the anti-graft court ruled that while there is no direct evidence of concerted action by the defendants, the prosecution was able to prove conspiracy by connecting the independent actions of each accused.

"The separate acts of all the accused in the present case contributed in the end result of defrauding the government," the court declared.

Records showed that the NMP Board of Trustees approved a plan for the school's expansion in 1995 and authorized Palomo to negotiate for the acquisition of land deemed suitable for the purpose.

Vizconde slay accessory won't leave prison yet

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE FORMER POLICEMAN CONVICTED AS accessory in the Vizconde massacre is willing to stay behind bars to press his innocence even though he could be free as, technically, he has already served his sentence.

Gerardo Biong, through lawyer Ricardo Valmonte, filed a motion contesting a Court of Appeals' decision last Dec. 15 which in effect reduced his jail term but upheld a lower court's verdict finding him guilty of tampering with the evidence in the 1991 rape with homicide case.

The CA ruling reduced Biong's original sentence of 11 years to 12 years to an indeterminate jail term from six years to 12 years. Biong had been in jail for 10 years, according to Valmonte, and would qualify to be set free already.

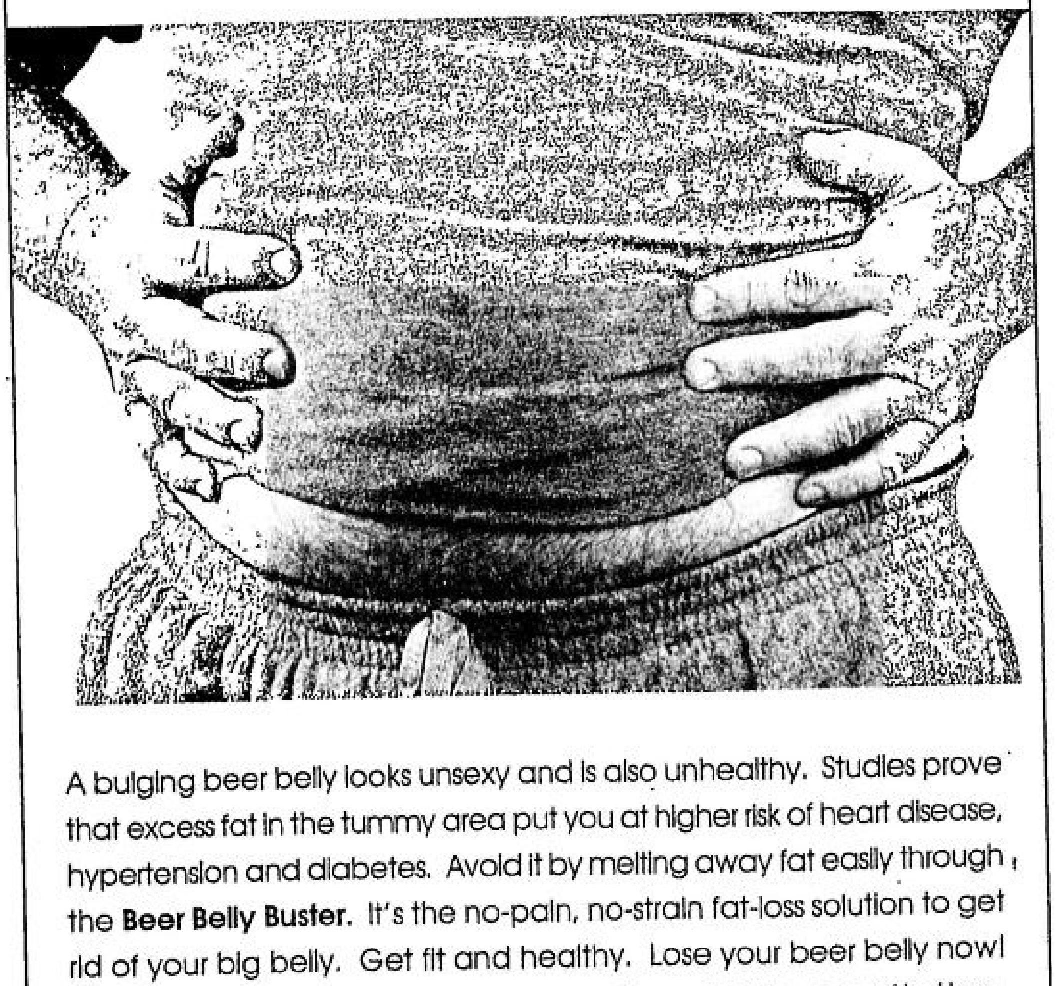
But Biong wants to press for an acquittal and would not leave prison because that would be tantamount to accepting the CA's ruling that he was an accessory in the killing of Estrellita Vizconde and her daughters Carmela and Jennifer, Valmonte said. Carmela was raped before being killed.

"*Bakit siya aatras sa laban, hindi naman siya ang gumawa? Ayaw naming lumaya, gusto naming baligtarin ang* decision. (Why should he back off from the fight when he is innocent? We don't want to be free, we want the decision reversed.) That's the price we pay," Valmonte told reporters yesterday when asked why he had not acted for the release of his client in light of the ruling:

The CA ruling also upheld the guilty verdict on principals Hubert Webb, Antonio "Tony Boy" Lejano, Michael Gatchalian, Hospicio "Pyke" Fernandez, Peter Estrada and Miguel "Ging" Rodriguez.

In his motion for reconsideration, Biong sought to be acquitted, saying there was insufficient evidence to support the claim that he had gone to the Vizconde residence to clean up the blood upon Webb's orders.

HAWAII-ILOCOS CENTENNIAL
Hawaii Gov. Linda Lingle is met at the airport by Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson upon her arrival Tuesday night for an eight-day goodwill visit. Her visit kicks off the 2006 activities commemorating the centennial of the arrival of Filipino migrant workers, mostly Ilocanos, in Hawaii in 1906. ROGER MARGALLO



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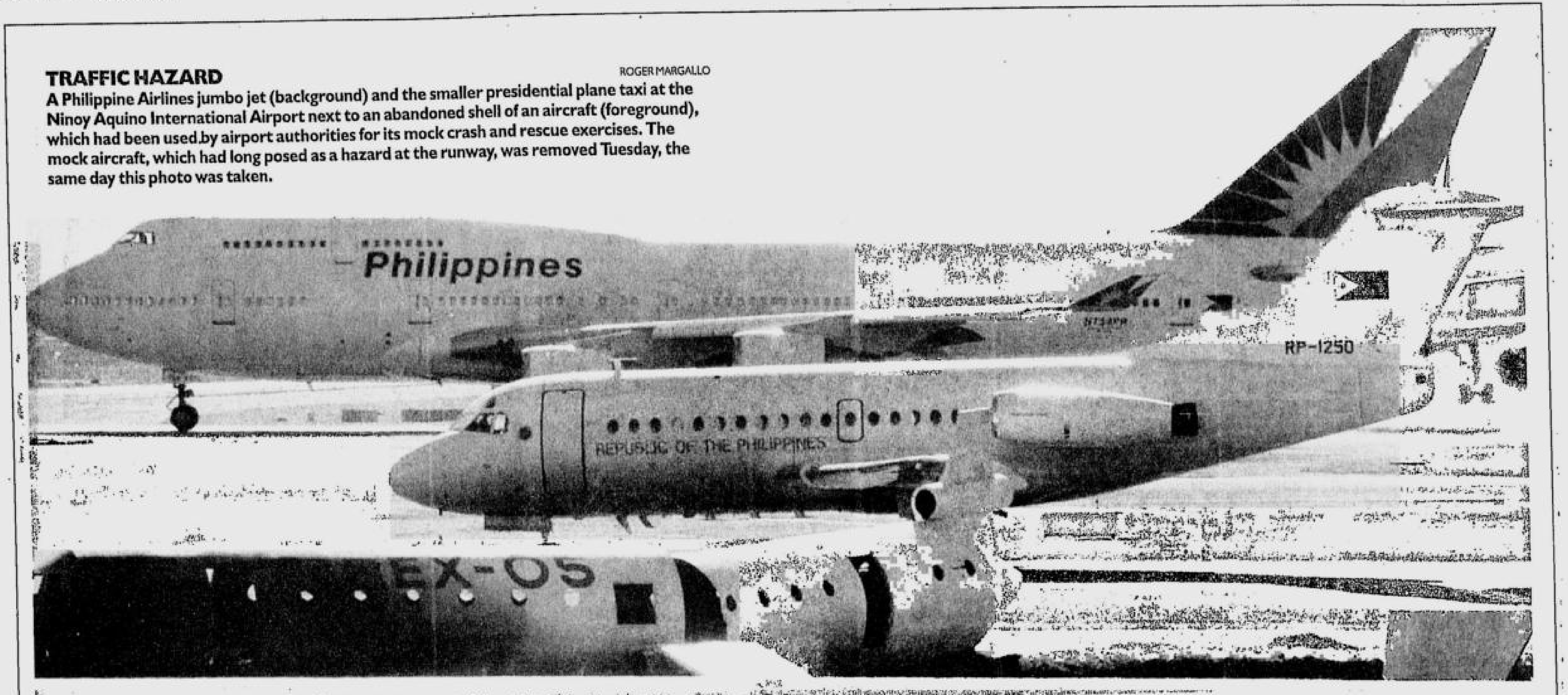


TRAFFIC HAZARD

ROGER MARGALLO

A Philippine Airlines jumbo jet (background) and the smaller presidential plane taxi at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport next to an abandoned shell of an aircraft (foreground), which had been used by airport authorities for its mock crash and rescue exercises. The mock aircraft, which had long posed as a hazard at the runway, was removed Tuesday, the same day this photo was taken.

P45-M grants for forest conservation

By Blanche S. Rivera

A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION WOULD provide some P45 million in grants this year to finance small forest conservation projects all over the country.

The Philippine Tropical Forest Conservation Foundation Inc. (PTFCF) has chosen 11 non-government organizations that would receive a total of P5 million in grants for forest protection and restoration activities.

The PTFCF would launch the call for the second batch of project proposals in March. The 2006 grants cycle has a budget of up to P40 million, executive director Maria Paz Luna said in a statement.

The forest conservation efforts were initiated by the NGOs after the Department of Environment and Natural Resources cancelled more than 200 community-based forest management agreements due to their failure to comply with the terms of the accord.

The DENR, which has been reviewing more than 5,000 forest plans and agreements, cancelled more CBFMAs than commercial and industrial contracts for forest utilization.

Originally intended in 1995 to allow local communities and small stakeholders to benefit from the forest while taking care of it, the model of community-based forest management agreement has yielded "spotty results," the PTFCF admitted.

Luna, however, said the absence of strong and sustained outside support and capacity enhancement has made forest conservation more of a burden to the poor forest dwellers.

"The Foundation hopes that in the course of its grantmaking, this expectation placed on poor communities for forest conservation be a burden and privilege shared by society as a whole," Luna said.

Solon eyes economic zone in Surigao Sur

By Philip C. Tubeza

SURIGAO DEL SUR MAY ZOOM its way to prosperity and out of the list of the country's 20 poorest provinces if a proposal to turn large chunk of it into a special economic zone succeeds, according to the province's lone congressman.

Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay said he has filed House Bill 4961, which seeks to establish the Surigao del Sur Special Economic Zone and Free Port in the municipalities of Carrsacal, Cantilan, Madrid, Carmen and Lanuza.

Pichay said the province's location, rich natural resources, and human capital with varying skills and trades, highly qualify it as an economic zone.

"The proposed Surigao del Sur Economic Zone will not only contribute to the development of one of the nation's 20 poorest provinces, but also concomitantly contribute to regional and national development," he said.

"The capital, technological, and knowledge spillovers of the proposed Surigao del Sur Economic Zone will filter throughout the country, thereby helping attain the government's agenda of economic dynamism and competitiveness," he added.

A special economic zone would attract investors by allowing them to import capital equipment and raw materials free of duties, taxes and other import restrictions.

Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
DANGEROUS DRUGS BOARD
3RD Flr. PDEA Bldg., NIA Rd., East Triangle,
Diliman, Quezon City

TRIBUTE

TO

THE HONORABLE
SENATOR ROBERT Z. BARBERS

The Dangerous Drugs Board pays tribute to the late Senator Robert Z. Barbers, and is sincerely grateful for his meritorious contributions in the field of drug abuse prevention and control, for his outstanding efforts and initiatives to help curb the growing seriousness of the drug problem in the country and for his unstinted support and assistance to various programs and activities of the Agency.

The Board expresses its heartfelt and deepest condolences to his bereaved family, relatives and friends.

May his soul rest in peace.

Sr. Undersecretary DIONISIO R. SANTIAGO
Executive Director

ANGELO T. REYES
Chairman
Dangerous Drugs Board

Retired justice goes to PCGG

PRESIDENT MACApagal-Arroyo has pulled out of retirement a justice of the Sandiganbayan and recycled an Estrada appointee to fill up empty seats in the Presidential Commission on Good Government and the Department of Finance.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita yesterday announced the appointment of former Sandiganbayan Justice Narciso Nario as PCGG Commissioner in lieu of Alvin Dans and Gaudencio Mendoza Jr. as Finance Undersecretary replacing Emmanuel Bonoan, who resigned last month due to personal reasons.

Nario was a member of the Sandiganbayan's Third Division. He will replace Dans, who had been appointed to the PCVGG only in July last year. Ermita did not say why he was being replaced.

Mendoza was executive secretary for legal affairs in the Estrada administration. He was one of six officials named in the impeachment complaint against Estrada as having been given numerous high-ranking positions in violation of a Constitutional provision barring the holding of multiple positions in government. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

Coal-free Negros soon to be powered solely by 'clean' fuel

By Blanche S. Rivera

ONCE KNOWN AS THE LAND run by sugar barons, Negros Occidental may soon be known as the land that nature power runs.

The province is being eyed as Southeast Asia's first-ever community to be fully powered by renewable energy, according to international environmental activist group Greenpeace.

Greenpeace international energy campaigner Athena Ronquillo-Ballesteros said the local government's commitment to using sustainable renewable energy as source of power in the province had been hailed in many Asian countries.

Recognized as one of the few places in the Philippines with a renewable energy policy, Negros Occidental is the first community in Southeast Asia to reject the entry of coal-fired power plants.

Political will

"Negros has demonstrated that communities can take the renewable energy route and challenge the will of the coal plant industry, organizations that fund them like the Japan International Bank for Cooperation and the Asian Development Bank, and countries like Australia which fuel their dependence on coal," Ballesteros said in a statement.

But Negros Occidental cannot realize its potential as the model province without the backing of the national government and even international funding institutions.

"Leadership and political will from national governments and international financial institutions are necessary to complete a process that was started over three years ago," Ballesteros said.

Challenge to lenders

"Without their commitment, communities all over Southeast Asia will continue to suffer the effects of coal and fossil fuel dependency," she said.

Greenpeace has been urging the ADB and JBIC to shift their lending commitments toward clean energy and channel 10 percent of their loans to renewable energy projects by 2010 and 20 percent by 2020.

"Institutions like the JBIC and the ADB who bankroll climate change should see the Negros experience as an opportunity to change course immediately."

Wind, solar power

Fighting against multinationals, Negros Occidental became the first ever community in the Philippines and Asia in 2002 to block the establishment and operation of a coal power plant.

It has since committed to becoming the first community in the Philippines and in Southeast Asia to be powered 100% by renewable energy sources, such as wind, solar, geothermal and modern biomass.

Threat of climate change

A recent report by an Asian energy research group concluded that the Philippines and Asia are facing the likelihood of devastating social and economic disruptions if climate change in the region is not addressed immediately.

"The people of the Philippines and Asia require leadership if we are to avert future disasters," Ballesteros said. "The world urgently needs an energy policy that reflects the reality of climate change."

Corrections

JESS YUSON

PRC CHAIR Jaime A. Dilag

ANSBERT JOAQUIN

JUDGE Renato Dilag

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, a photo (left) that appeared on Page A4 is that of Philippine Racing Commission Chair Jaime A. Dilag—not Olongapo Judge Renato Dilag. At right is the photo of Judge Dilag.

* * *

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, the caption of a front-page photo misstated that Tadeo Palma is the brother of the late Justice Cecilia Munoz-Palma. He is her son.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Lorna Kalaw Tirol, readers' advocate, e-mail address: readersadvocate@inquirer.com. ph or fax Nos. 897-47-93/94, Attn: Readers Advocate. Her phone number is 897-8808 Local 342.

How a 'kaingin' farmer became 'Dr. Luis'

From page A1

based in Barangay San Dionisio, Parañaque City.

More than 80 tribal leaders had earlier taken part in the program at the Our Lady of Peace Hospital, which is part of the Folpmi complex.

EDWIN BACASMAS

"GUIDING LIGHT" and president of the Foundation of Our Lady of Peace Mission, Inc., Sister Eva Fidela Maamo is the moving force behind the "barefoot doctors" program in areas where there are no government health workers.

Unforgettable

Midru said he would never forget the program's closing rites, where he stood "in awe" as a medical kit, along with his certificate of completion, was handed to him by Folpmi officers.

Each kit contains, among other items, a box of assorted medicines, a stethoscope, a blood pressure monitor, a basic surgical set, forceps, scissors and gloves.

Timoteo Suroday, another Mangyan trainee, said he gained "full understanding" of what being a barefoot doctor meant, and his responsibilities."

Field personnel of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples say most, if not all, members of the Mangyan tribe live below the poverty line.

With very little, if not nil, medical services from the government, many villagers are just left to die in the mountains. And a number of tribal members have been content to sit back and wait for miracles to happen.

"Not anymore. We can't just wait forever for outside help," Suroday said.

Midru aired a similar view. He said members of ethnic groups "should help the government solve some of the basic problems confronting us, like hunger and illiteracy."

"I think that in our own little way, we're in a position to do just that," he said.

Midru said he returned to Manguyang with "not only a new sense of [himself] and what [he could] accomplish but also a deeper understanding of other indigenous communities."

Christy Havana, a Manobo from Agusan del Sur, acknowledged that she and the other program graduates could not change things in their communities overnight.

"But the training has prepared us for the challenges ahead," she said.

Heartwarming

Feedback from the barefoot doctors' communities has been "very encouraging, really heartwarming," said Sr. Eva Fidela Maamo, president of Folpmi and, according to the staff, its "guiding light."

A member of the local community of St. Paul of Chartres, Maamo said "many lives" in indigenous communities nationwide had been saved because of the barefoot doctors.

"More miracles are likely to happen in other areas hosting minority groups. But we should never forget that saving lives is really in the hands of God. We're only His instruments," Maamo, a medical surgeon, told the INQUIRER.

In 1992, Maamo received the Mother Teresa Award, which was established in 1983 by the Alfonso Yuchengco Foundation and the Manila Jaycees.

Named after the Albanian-born founder of the Missionaries of Charity and 1979 Nobel Peace Prize laureate and candidate for sainthood, the award is given to outstanding individuals who have dedicated their lives to serving the poor, the destitute and the abandoned.

In 1997, Maamo received the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership, and in 2003, the Outstanding Filipino Award for Community Service of the Philippine Jaycees and Insular Life.

Making the difference

Maamo takes pride not only in Folpmi's success but also in its vision ("the uplift of less fortunate individuals, families and communities for sustainable human development") and mission ("to actualize the teachings of God through charity work").

She said the foundation had taken the road less traveled—and "that's what made the difference."

Maamo reported that the first three batches of barefoot doctors had "actually made a difference in the lives of tribal folk" because they passed on what they had learned to their respective communities.

Thirty tribal leaders took part in the January 2005 pilot training program, another 30 in July, and 25 in October.

After completing the training, barangay health worker Juliet Pinkihan, 49, immediately returned to her hometown of Lagawe, Ifugao, brimming with ideas and the desire to make a difference in other people's lives.

At 18, Mariano Perez and Donna Garcia were the youngest in their batch of trainees.

Perez, a Talaandig from La Paz, Agusan del Sur, saw the program as "an opportunity to gain experience and expand my knowledge of other ethnic groups."

Garcia, a Mangyan-Buhid, is another native of Gloria, Oriental Mindoro.

Access to health care

In the 1970s, "most indigenous communities had very limited access to health care," Maamo observed.

She added: "Women and children were the most vulnerable groups. Morbidity and mortality rates from childbirth and common infectious diseases were high."

At that time, she had started working in a mission and lived with the T'boli of Lake Sebu in Surallah, South Cotabato.

She pioneered the training of natives belonging to seven tribal groups—including the B'laan, Ubo, Manobo and Maguindanao—as health workers, "parateachers" and community organizers.

Within a year, Maamo said, the incidence of infectious diseases in the Lake Sebu area had dropped by at least one-third.

In 1984, Folpmi started as a medical mission that Maamo headed with the backing of volunteer medical practitioners and civic groups.

From the medical mission, the foundation expanded its services, helping urban poor communities and indigenous villages in Luzon and Mindanao.

The foundation, which is chaired by Fr. James Reuter, S.J., reflects some of the enduring Filipino ideals and values, like self-sacrifice, commitment to service, and the bayanihan spirit.

The other Folpmi officials are lawyer Antonio Bernas, vice president; Dr. Raquel Malimas, secretary; Suzanne Yuchengco-Santos, treasurer; lawyer Benita Santos, legal officer; Manolito Gonzales, auditor; and Bienvenida Bernas, Mariano Salazar and Ambassador Oscar Villadolid, members.

Partners

Folpmi and an Aeta community displaced by the Mt. Pinatubo eruptions in 1991 jointly run the Aeta Resettlement and Rehabilitation Center in Sitio Gala, Barangay Sacatihan-Aningway, in Subic, Zambales.

The center's development plan "covers all aspects and core competencies of the foundation in health, education, livelihood, community organization and spiritual and value formation," said Maamo.

"Today," she said, "the Aeta and Folpmi are partners in helping shape the indigenous community's destiny for a better quality of life and realize our vision of an empowered and self-sustained Aeta community."

Maamo said young Aeta villagers Carmela Santos, 17, and Carlota Romanban, 19—who both took part in the October training program—would play important roles in attaining that goal.

Aside from the 100-bed Our Lady of Peace Hospital, which the foundation calls "a hospital for the poor," Folpmi operates a care center for the sexually abused.

It also provides feeding and day care services to depressed areas in Manila, Navotas, Cavite and Zambales, and conducts leadership training seminars and arts workshops.

Folpmi has likewise put up a scholarship program (for high school and college students) in nine Metro Manila squatter colonies and selected tribal communities.

Continuing concerns

According to Maamo, the tribal folk's problems will remain "a major concern" of the foundation, along with the regular monitoring of the barefoot doctors and their "lifesaving miracles."

It's a work in progress, she said.

Added a member of the Folpmi staff: "The foundation has tilled the soil and planted the seeds. With God's help, the seeds will grow and start bearing rich fruits."

"Other living things" have benefited from the training program, Maamo said.

She quoted an Aeta trainee from Subic as saying that thanks to the "very effective" training, he was able to save a patient on whom a tree trunk had fallen.

The trainee had administered mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, which he learned at the program.

"I said, 'Who was your patient?' He said, 'Sister, a monkey.' It turned out to be his father's pet for the last five years," Maamo said.

Roll call of tribal doctors

THE OTHER GRADUATES OF the October training program of the Foundation of Our Lady of Peace Mission Inc. are: Dominga Pinkihan and Teresita Bulligan (Ifugao); Jose Angeles and Wilfredo Jamilla Jr. (Mangyan-Tadyawan, Oriental Mindoro); Sheryl Esmani and Salvador Lampinigan (Badjao, Leyte); Chareza Padecio (Manobo, Leyte); Merlyn Buklas and Elpidio Calinawan (Mamanwa, Leyte); Rafael Enolpe, Joenita Apog, Corazon Dohinod, Marites Bayona and Jonebert Lascapon (Subanen, Zamboanga Sibugay); Romelyn Martinez and Jean Rose Plana (Manobo, Agusan del Sur); Christony Amado (Talaandig, Agusan del Sur); Amalia Garciano (Talaandig, Bukidnon); Rommel Fuentes and Junnie Tawide Jr. (Banwa-on, Agusan del Sur); Evelia Comendador, Pinda Sumbongan, Evelyn Alahay, Lilibeth Mon-ay and Bevelyn Tinoy (Higao-non of Bukidnon).

Among the other ethnic groups that responded to Sr. Eva Fidela Maamo's "challenge to serve" by sending representatives to the training program were the Bontok, Isneg, Isinai, Ivatan, Ibanag, Itawe, Remontado, Dumagat, Mangyan-Hanunuo, Mangyan-Iraya, Taubuid, Tagbanua, Palaw'an, Agta, Agta-Cimaron, Agta-Tabangnon, Matig-Salog, Samal-Bangingi, Ummayamon, Tiruray, Aromanen, Ilianen-Keriteken, Pulangiyen, Kongking, Yakan, T'boli and Tagakaolo.

RP cashing in on medical tourism boom

From page A1

volved in medical tourism.

Del Mundo said Asian patients, mostly women between 20 and 60, usually go for blepharoplasty to widen the contours of their normally almond eyes. The procedure costs as much as $10,000 (roughly P520,000) in South Korea and Japan, but only around P150,000 in the Philippines.

Liposuction

Also a hit among foreigners are liposuction, nose and face lift, and lasik surgery, a high-end corrective procedure on the cornea. Lasik is only around P60,000, more than half its normal cost abroad, according to Del Mundo.

Life-threatening cases such as coronary artery bypass graft, and kidney and bone marrow transplants are also aplenty, he said.

Heart bypass is worth around P500,000 locally or half the price abroad. Kidney transplant is also much cheaper here at P3 million. Elsewhere, the complicated procedure costs about P7 million, Del Mundo said.

"It's a very promising industry," he told the INQUIRER in an interview yesterday.

"It will catapult us to the world stage of medical tourism and it will be a dollar earner. At the same time, it will help stem the tide of brain drain in the Philippines."

Del Mundo predicted that the country would catch up with neighboring countries in the multibillion-dollar global medical tourism industry over the next three years.

Even if India, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore started in the late 1990s, it would not be too difficult for the Philippines to bridge the gap, he said. The four countries are the more dominant in Asia in the field of medical tourism.

Compassion, competence

It's just a matter of capitalizing on the country's natural advantages, particularly the compassion and competence of Filipino health professionals, the health official said, adding that command of the English language is also a plus.

"The quality of our doctors and health professionals is very high," he said. "We are very caring and compassionate. We have qualities not found in neighboring countries."

So far, Del Mundo said the medical tourism program has had tourists from South Korea, Japan, and China in Asia, to as far as the United States, and Germany, France, and the Netherlands in Europe.

Kidney donor

Since available kidneys are scarce in the country, foreign patients are asked to "bring your own kidney donor" who is usually a relative or a close friend, according to the undersecretary.

"We don't want Filipinos to be sacrificed in favor of medical tourism," he said.

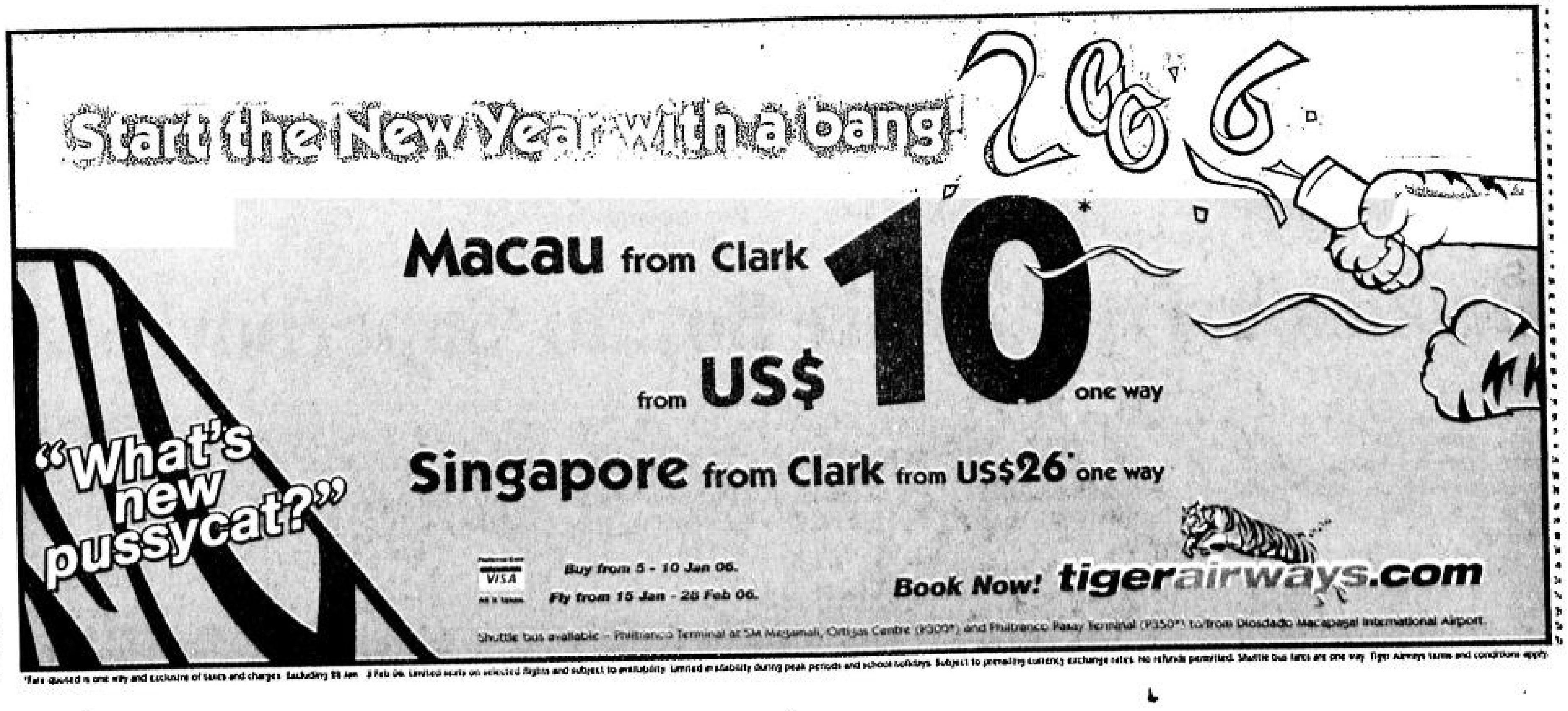
For serious medical cases, foreigners can choose from five government and five private hospitals being marketed as centers for the local medical tourism program.

They are Capitol Medical Center, St. Lukes Medical Center, Asian Hospital, Medical City, Makati Medical Center, Lung Center, Philippine Heart Center, National Kidney Institute, Philippine Children's Medical Center, and East Avenue Medical Center.

Global retirement village

Besides the international medical tourism industry, the government is also targeting the global "retirement village," Del Mundo said.

By 2010 to 2020, between 500,000 and 3 million Filipino-American retirees are expected to settle in the Philippines and elsewhere. "There will be a tsunami of Filipino-American retirees and we should be prepared for that," he said.



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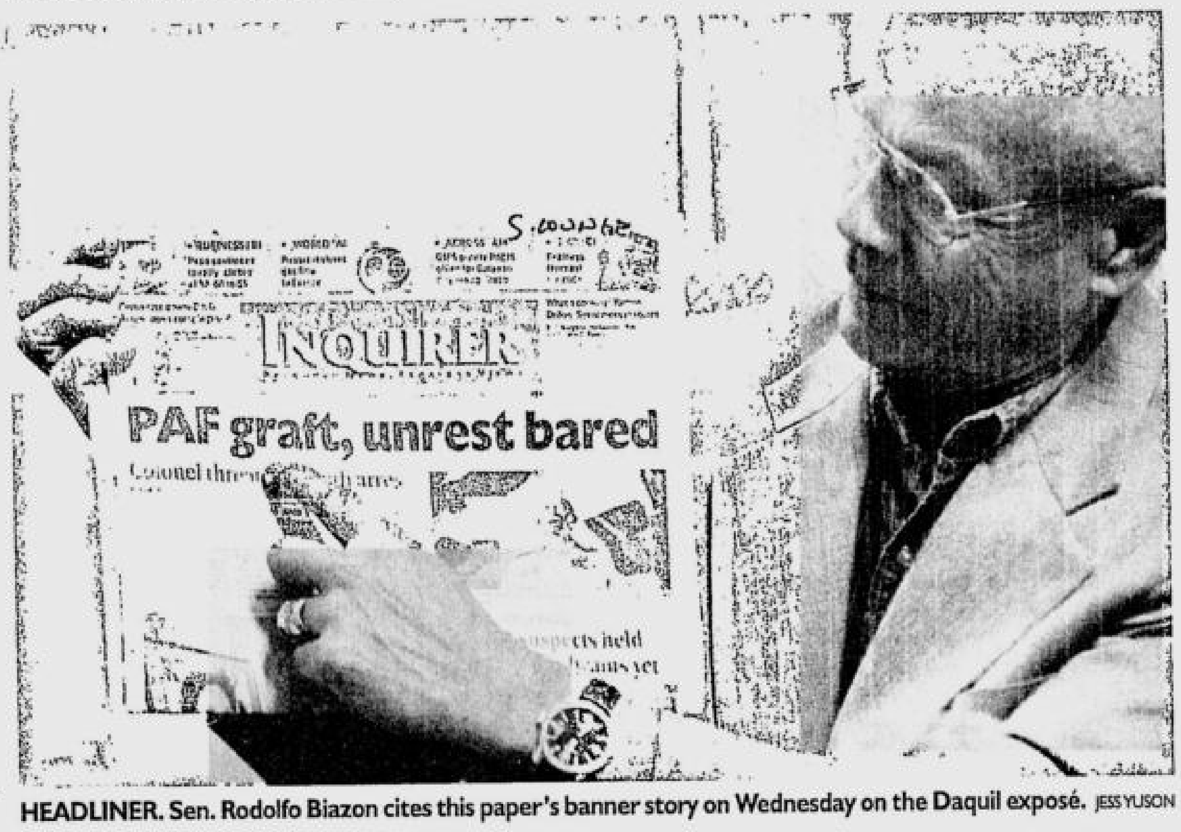
PAF colonel turns himself in day after blasting superiors

CALINGASAN

MAN IN THE MIDDLE: Col. Efren Daquil between lawyer Homobono Adaza and Col. Oscar Calingasan, Group Commander of the Air Force, turns himself in at headquarters. REM ZAMORA



HEADLINER. Sen. Rodolfo Biazon cites this paper's banner story on Wednesday on the Daquil exposé. JESS YUSON

From page A1

ate superior, Col. Oscar Calingasan, commander of the Headquarters Support Group, and Col. Arthur Abadilla, the Air Force provost marshall.

Daquil told reporters he did not regret publicly revealing that Air Force officers were "illegally" receiving up to P45,000 in monthly allowances and asking the PAF commanding general, Lt. Gen. Jose Reyes, to explain how the P30 million in savings from Daquil's stint as PAF personnel office chief in 2004 was spent.

"The timing of his exposé is suspect," said Lt. Col. Restituto Padilla, PAF spokesperson. "We have to dig deeper into this."

Padilla said that it was strange that Daquil waited for a year before he came out with his exposé. He said there were rumors about destabilization in the military, mainly through text messages.

He said there also were attempts by rebellious military elements to recruit from the Tactical Operations Group and the 15th Strike Wing.

"Recruiting from the Air Force is strategic because we have enough firepower and we have the air power. These are components that not even a big army on land could match," Padilla said.

"Colonel Daquil could have been used wittingly or unwittingly by people behind destabilization moves," Padilla said.

Wayward like a bullet

Padilla described Daquil as "one of the promising officers in the Air Force" as well as an officer who "went wayward like a bullet" with his supposed exposé.

He said Daquil could possibly be charged with violations of the Articles of War for breaking the chain of command and bringing his grievances directly to the media.

In a news conference, Padilla said that Daquil could be charged with violation of Article 96 (displaying conduct unbecoming of an officer and a gentleman) and 97 (conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline).

"We are very grateful that he went back to our control in the Air Force," Padilla said.

Padilla said that the Air Force provost marshall's office would conduct a preliminary investigation, and based on the results, would determine if Daquil would face a court-martial.

"He is currently under no restriction yet pending investigation but there might be one. We are asking him to stay within the PAF headquarter's premises," Padilla said.

Padilla also said that personal issues kept Daquil from the promotion that he wanted, suggesting that these might have prompted him to go to the media with his allegations.

He said that Daquil had filed for terminal leave after he declined the position offered to him by the PAF as deputy of the 2nd Tactical Operations Wing in Mactan.

"Suffice to say, it is an issue that borders on some aspects of the AFP code of ethics," he said.

Later, Padilla said that Daquil—a married man and a father of three grown children—had admitted to having a "girlfriend." *(See story above.)*

Padilla also showed documents which he said would prove that the P30 million in savings under Daquil's service as personnel chief had been turned over to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

The money was subsequently used to purchase athletic wear for the Air Force soldiers. The bidding and awarding were conducted by the DBM, Padilla said.

"The Air Force did not hold in its hands a single cent after the P30 million was transferred through check ... By talking before you now, we're saying that the Air Force is open to any investigation. We want to prove him wrong," Padilla said.

According to the procurement form, the P30 million in savings was used to purchase the following: 10,186 pieces of rubber shoes at P900 each for P9,167,400; 19,652 short pants at P200 each for P3,930,400; 19,652 bags at P500 each for P9,826,000; 4,318 shirts with collar for officers at P200 each for P863,600; and 34,988 round neck shirts for enlisted men at P200 for P6,997,600.

Samples of these items, owned by an enlisted soldier, were shown by Padilla to reporters.

As for the allowances, Padilla said that these were not discretionary funds but were intended for operational support, such as purchase of office supplies.

"They come under a strict rule on how they should be used. The allowances are part of the budget and are properly liquidated," he said, adding that Daquil could even be liable if he kept his allowance in a bank, as he said.

Explanation unsatisfactory

"We don't know how his office managed to operate without this," Padilla added.

In an interview over ANC television, Daquil said he was not satisfied with Padilla's explanation. "They have to give me a copy of their papers and I have to examine it," he said.

"It is easy to say that the money was spent for that purpose but if you ask the soldiers, they have not received their combat clothing allowances that they should have," he added.

Daquil also said he was "puzzled by the procedures" presented by Padilla during his news conference, particularly about the money being spent on athletic gear.

"As far as I know, the DBM policy says you cannot use personnel services funds (for) any other (purpose)," he said.

Daquil also said that he only went public with his allegations now because "I never heard anything else despite my questions to him," referring to Col. Alexander Flores of the PAF logistics.

Daquil said that he could file charges with the Office of the Ombudsman if he found the PAF explanation unsatisfactory.

Senate calls for credible probe

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon said Ms Arroyo should order a "transparent and credible investigation" of Daquil's allegations.

Biazon said Daquil was "raising questions in the minds of the public, Congress and more importantly, an internal audience in the Armed Forces."

"If we are talking of stability in the Armed Forces, this could be put to doubt if there's no credible resolution to these issues raised by Colonel Daquil," said Biazon.

Biazon, a former Armed Forces chief of staff, suggested that the military Inspector General conduct the investigation of Daquil's allegations even as he cautioned the military against threatening the whistle-blower with arrest and court-martial.

Biazon stressed that the military had to fully explain Daquil's charges amid reports that the government was short of money to pay the P42 billion in benefits of retirees and to fund the demand for increase in soldiers' subsistence allowance.

In a statement, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. also urged the military to investigate Daquil's allegations and called on the Air Force to stop harassing him.

"If Colonel Daquil is telling the truth, the generals concerned should be investigated and punished accordingly," he said.

Dealing with adventurists

Representatives Antonio Cuenco (Lakas, Cebu City) and Federico Sandoval II (LP, Malabon-Navotas) said Daquil's claim that Air Force generals and wing commanders received illegal monthly allowances indicated that the colonel was "preempting the AFP to counter any move about his dealing with military adventurists."

Cuenco said the burden of proof lay on Daquil who, Cuenco said, had himself admitted received his share of monthly "illegal" allowance of P8,500.

"If Daquil says such allowance is anomalous, then he is as guilty as the others," he said.

"The allowances should have been subjected to the normal process of accounting. The PAF must show these documents instead of just brushing aside the graft allegations of Daquil," Sandoval said.

With reports from TJ Burgonio, Philip C. Tubeza and Norman Bordadora

Standing only 5'4'', Daquil always ...

From page A1

Daquil was described as "one of the first to stand up for his principles and take a stand," said the member of the PMA class of 1976 to which Daquil belonged. "He was brave, gutsy and strong willed."

The classmate, who did not wish to be named, lauded Daquil's disclosures on Tuesday about alleged corruption in the Philippine Air Force.

Nothing unusual about him

"It's high time someone came out. How else will the public know about what's going on in the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines). It's a violation of policy but he had the guts to still do it, just like in our days as cadets," the officer said.

Two of Daquil's "mistahs," or PMA graduates, paint a different picture of the officer.

Brig. Gen. Alexander Yano told the INQUIRER that there was "nothing unusual" and "nothing extraordinary" about Daquil during his cadet days.

Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil also said that Daquil "was just like anyone of us who spoke our minds and who live up to traditions" of the PMA.

Daquil and Bataoil worked side by side from 1993 to 1995 fighting the communist insurgency in Negros. Bataoil was then provincial director while Daquil was commander of the PAF unit in the island.

"After our days in the academy, I have known him to be an Air Force officer with a promising career. During our time in Negros, he performed his job outstandingly well," Bataoil said.

Bataoil, spokesperson of the Philippine National Police, also said Daquil must face the consequences of his act.

"The command position of the PAF is correct. There are certain procedures in bringing out concerns and he has to follow these as a member of a professional organization," Bataoil explained.

Immorality

A story about Daquil that is going around Villamor Air Base, headquarters of the PAF, is how Daquil left his wife for a member of the military's Women's Auxiliary Corps (WAC). He had courted her on a dare.

But in his interview on Tuesday with reporters, Daquil said he expected his detractors to bring up the "immorality" issue against him.

"If they can show me any complaint or any case in court that I'm immoral, I'm willing to be jailed," Daquil said.

Daquil said he was not the only officer involved in extra-marital affairs.

"Who among the generals and colonels does not have a girlfriend? If they charge me with having a girlfriend, I'll admit I had a girlfriend. I'm accepting it. Even you reporters, you have a lot of girlfriends," he said.

All in the past

"But now, there is no girlfriend," said Daquil, a father of three from his first marriage who has been in the service for 29 years. "That was in the past. I did not shack up with anyone and I didn't have a child with anyone."

Daquil's last assignment was Deputy Wing Commander of the PAF's 710th Special Operations Wing based in Clark Air Base, an elite antiterrorism unit.

The unit has received the most training from the Americans and was said to be fiercely loyal to Daquil.

In 2004, Daquil was Chief of the PAF's Personnel Office.

In 2001, he became Chief of Staff of the PMA after serving as commander of the PAF's Flying School in Fernando Air Base in Lipa City, Batangas, where he taught a whole generation of fighter pilots. *With a report from Luige A. del Puerto*

He abandoned me and our children, says estranged wife

From page A1

year-old, Emi said her husband had abandoned her and their three grown children for a younger woman in March last year after 25 years of marriage.

This is known throughout the Air Force, she said, weeping.

He couldn't manage a family

She said her husband's exposé was motivated by one thing: "He did not get what he wanted, what he had aspired for many years." She said Daquil wanted to become a PAF wing commander.

"If you can't manage your family, how can you manage a command," she said.

Emi also said she was compelled to speak in defense of the Air Force commanding ceneral, Lt. Gen. Jose Reyes.

Reyes and his wife, according to Emi, were very close to her and Daquil.

"They were very close even when they were still lieutenants. They were the best of friends. We're like eating from just one plate because of our closeness," she said.

And when the marriage started to crumble, Emi said, Reyes was the friend who counseled Daquil.

Emi said that as far as she knew, her husband had no political connections.

However, his situation now—his failure to get a good position in the Air Force—has most likely made him vulnerable to influences from people behind the destabilization moves against the Arroyo administration, she said.

"If he had that position, do you think he'll speak against the command? It's just one plus one equals two," Emi said.

"A lot of officers are honorable and are true to their families and wives," Emi said.

CRYING LADY is Emi Daquil, wife of the colonel, who blew the whistle on alleged irregularities in the Air Force. ROGER MARGALLO

Defensor: From 'Spice Boy' to 'Superboy' to 'Powerpuff'

From page A1

vorite Cabinet secretary to a Palace-based office but Environment Secretary Michael Defensor's heart belongs to the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita yesterday hinted that Defensor could be moving to a new office soon as part of the President's New Year reshuffle although the so-called "little president" did not say where.

"He (Defensor) is a superboy. We expect him to do good wherever the President places him," Ermita said in his weekly press briefing.

Defensor said that he was one of those offered by the President to head the Presidential Management Staff vacated by newly appointed Philippine Ambassador to Greece Rigoberto Tiglao.

But Defensor said the President had yet to make up her mind on whether he should leave the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. "Nothing is final yet," Defensor said.

Closer to poor

When asked what Cabinet position he would pick if the President gave him the choice, Defensor answered without batting an eyelash: "Social welfare secretary because I want to work closer to the poor."

The former Quezon City representative, who was one of the then neophyte congressmen dubbed "Spice Boys," evaded questions on whether his desire to be the next social welfare secretary (currently held by Lualhati Pablo) was tied to his plan to run in the 2007 senatorial elections.

"The Constitution might have been changed by then and we have changed into a parliamentary form of government," Defensor said.

With GMA everywhere

Whether Defensor was chief of the government's housing portfolio (head of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council) or the environment bureau, Ermita said that "Defensor has always been the one accompanying the President everywhere."

Defensor was a campaign manager of the President in the 2004 elections and the President has repeatedly turned to him as troubleshooter on political matters, including last year's "Hello Garci" scandal.

Cory-FVR-Erap alliance sought

From page A1

guess that such a possible meeting among the three former Presidents was among the topics discussed when Ramos on Jan. 2 had a secret meeting in Makati with Senate President Franklin Drilon and former Sen. Vicente Sotto III. *(Story on Page A1.)*

But Ramos appeared to shoot down the idea.

"There is no way that will happen," Ramos said in an interview on ANC network during a diplomatic reception.

He added that what Morales said was probably "based on *haka-haka* (speculation), rumor and their own scenarios, *pero wala po yan* (but there is nothing to that)."

"You want me to join you?" Ramos rhetorically asked. "Why don't you do something better. You join me in trying to create a one, national Philippines...."

Ramos would not give a categorical answer when asked point-blank by ANC if he was withdrawing support from Ms Arroyo, saying, "Everybody is part of the team."

Pressed to be categorically, Ramos answered: "Com' on."

Morales, a stalwart of Estrada's Partido ng Masang Pilipino, said in an interview with the INQUIRER that UNO believed Ramos was already moving toward the same position adopted by Aquino and Estrada—that Ms Arroyo should step down soon.

Principals updated

Drilon is known for his close ties with Aquino while Sotto is a member of the opposition that looks up to Estrada as its leader.

A highly reliable source said Drilon and Sotto had "reported to their principals" the results of their meeting with Ramos.

"I don't know what transpired in the meeting among Ramos, Drilon and Tito Sotto, but I surmise it included the proposed meeting of the three former leaders," Morales said.

He said the opposition believed that Ramos also wanted Ms Arroyo to step down.

Ploy to keep GMA in power

"Until now, President Ramos has yet to take back his 'monumental blunder' speech," Morales said, referring to Ramos' recent remarks criticizing Ms Arroyo's move to endorse to Congress a proposed draft Constitution, drawn up by her handpicked Consultative Commission, which calls for the scrapping of the 2007 elections to set the stage for the full parliamentary system of government by 2010.

"It's a sign that he also wants Ms Arroyo to leave office soon," Morales added.

A political saviour

Ramos, who wants early elections to clear the way for a parliamentary government, is widely credited with saving Ms Arroyo from political annihilation in July last year.

That was when he came to her rescue and rallied the support of the Lakas party around her when she was confronted with a grave political crisis known since then as the "Hello Garci" scandal, which triggered the resignations of 10 of her key officials.

Morales said his group considered Ramos part of a broader movement calling for the resignation of Ms Arroyo, despite his previous expression of support for her.

Veto powers

"If we get these three national leaders, I think it's a very symbolic situation where we have the three former Presidents joining forces," Morales said in another interview on ANC.

Such a coalition "will really add power and fuel to the movement" in the face of growing dissatisfaction of the people with Ms Arroyo, as indicated in opinion surveys, he said.

Morales said he believed the three former Presidents could serve as senior advisers of a transitory "governing council" that could be set up after Ms Arroyo stepped down.

"Of course, they would have an important role as advisers to whatever kind of transition council would be organized," Morales told ANC.

"Maybe we can consider a situation where we ... can give them some veto powers or a very large participation in the governing council that will be organized."

Ramos' clout

Asked what Ramos could bring to the proposed alliance, Morales said:

"He commands a lot of following in the country. He has his political party, the Lakas-NUCD, and he has many loyal officers in the Armed Forces and in the local government. He can bring all these people to join in this movement asking for the resignation of President Arroyo."

Morales indicated in the television interview that his group was at the forefront of efforts to get Aquino, Ramos and Estrada under one wing.

"We would really like to take the first positive steps to get these three personalities to meet with each other," he said.

He added that the Jan. 2 meeting among Ramos, Drilon and Sotto could be viewed as "already an initial discussion."

Link to the people

"It could be in line with our earlier proposal that as soon as possible the three national leaders should get together," Morales said.

Morales said that from Ramos' previous stand of backing Ms Arroyo's stay in office, "I think he is already moving toward a clearer, critical position."

"You can imagine if three former Presidents take the same position, how can the (people) ignore that?"

Morales also said: "Being former presidents, (they) have a very direct connection with the greater majority of the people."

Palace belittles coup talk: We have undiminished faith ...

From page A1

officers down and accused Air Force generals and wing commanders of illegally receiving monthly allowances of P45,000 on top of their salaries.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita saw Daquil's action as "breach of discipline of a senior officer" rather than as part of a destabilization plot.

"I do not know if you will consider that destabilization," Ermita said.

Ermita said he had no information whether Daquil was working with any group.

A right-wing military faction mounted a brief mutiny against Ms Arroyo in 2003, accusing the military's top brass of corruption, but it was quashed a day later.

Clueless

Malacañang acknowledged it was clueless about Ramos' meeting with Drilon and Sotto but said it was certain its key ally was not about to change sides.

Ermita said Ramos after all was an "elder statesman" and had the national interest in mind.

"I would dare to say with my knowledge of President Ramos, the national interest is paramount with (him) and he would not wish to be linked with anything that could be interpreted as destabilizing," Ermita said. "He would rather that he plays a role in unifying our country."

At his weekly news conference, Ermita also said officials had cleared with Ramos any doubts he may have on the recommendations of Constitutional Consultative Commission after he met with the former President on Dec. 27.

Not ready to talk

Ramos continued to evade the media and went out of town again.

Through his spokesperson, Ed Malay, Ramos said: "I am not ready to talk about it (the meeting). Not now."

But Malay said Ramos would return to Manila on Friday and would face the media in his office on the same day, probably to address the issue.

Bunye said Ramos was "helping forge unity for the good of our nation and the welfare or our people."

He described Ramos as a "staunch ally of the administration," adding: "We are confident that whatever consensus arose from the meeting will be for the good of the country."

Rumors of new coup attempts against Ms Arroyo have been swirling since the opposition came out with audiotapes in June last year, which allegedly show that she cheated to win the May 2004 elections.

Many key Arroyo allies, including some of her Cabinet members, have turned against her and called for her resignation. Ms Arroyo has denied any wrongdoing and vowed to finish her term, which ends in 2010.

Ploy, psy-war, etc.

Ramos' meeting with Drilon and Sotto was Ramos' ploy to gain concessions from President Macapagal-Arroyo, according to senators.

"FVR is so full of mischief. My guess is that he is testing how far Gloria will go to keep him in tow," Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said. "[It's] a bargaining chip for concessions."

An administration senator, who asked not to be named, said the meeting was Ramos' "psy-war" tactic to make Ms Arroyo "follow what he wants."

"Now that Gloria is getting out of the morass, he makes himself a player again... It all boils down to power. Since Ramos is no longer in power, he wants to make himself a player all the time," he said.

An opposition senator, who also asked not to be named, said that the meeting was also Ramos' ploy to draw the attention of Ms Arroyo, who has ignored him for the past months.

"It's a setup. It's a psy-war tactic to send a message to Gloria that 'Hey, you're not minding me.' For a bottle of wine, he just wants to create a stir. It would be interesting to know who leaked the information to the media. If it's traced to the Ramos' camp, that would confirm our theory," he said.

'Acting President'

The meeting set off several speculations, including that the three personalities who belong to three disparate political blocs were forging an alliance against Ms Arroyo, who continued to grapple with charges that she stole the presidency.

Drilon was being eyed by a multi-sectoral group, the Black and White Movement, as "acting President" of a transition government that would take over the Arroyo administration.

He joined former President Corazon C. Aquino, under whom he had served as justice secretary, in calling for Ms Arroyo's resignation on July 8 last year.

Sotto, for his part, was closely identified with the camp of the late actor, Fernando Poe Jr., who lost to Ms Arroyo in last year's presidential election, and Arroyo's predecessor, Estrada.

More questions

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon said the meeting raised more questions on the administration's claim that Ms Arroyo has survived the worst political crisis of her political life.

Biazon said that it was possible, as sources had divulged, that Ramos, Drilon and Sotto had discussed the ConCom's proposal to scrap the 2007 elections.

So far, Drilon, Liberal Party president, has not discussed the agenda of the Jan. 2 meeting with party members. "At the proper time we will be told by him," he said

Vice President Noli de Castro asked the people to give Ramos, Drilon and Sotto the benefit of the doubt.

Ramos should disclose to the public whether he had forged an alliance with the opposition against Ms Arroyo, the spokesperson of the President's political party said.

"Their silence about their meeting has fueled speculations that they are cooking up something against the administration. The finger-pointing is deplorable and they cannot play with the people's mind and future," Isabela Rep. Anthony Miranda, Kampi spokesperson, said in a statement.

Playing coy

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles, stalwart of the Lakas-CMD party, also urged Ramos to disclose what transpired during the meeting. "If he has nothing to hide, he has nothing to fear in his disclosure," he said.

House Deputy Majority Leader Abraham Mitra said Ramos should stop playing coy, adding that restive officers in the military might misconstrue this as support for a coup.

"In these testy times, our support for the Constitution must be unequivocal. Responsible leaders should not stage events, meetings that could be read by adventurists as support for their cause," Mitra said.

Anakpawis party-list Rep. Rafael Mariano said Malacañang should not be "overconfident because Ramos—its main supporter—has started going to bed with Ms Arroyo's enemies."

Mariano said Ramos appeared to be "splitting the ranks" of the administration forces.

"It is highly impossible that FVR will negotiate on behalf of Ms Arroyo to forge unity with the opposition. Ramos has been highly displeased that after supporting Ms Arroyo last July 8, the illegitimate President has maneuvered to stay beyond the formula of graceful exit (Charter change) on which his support was conditioned," Mariano said. *With reports Cynthia D. Balana, Michael Lim Ubac and AFP*

Ermita says he also met with FVR

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY Eduardo Ermita said yesterday he met with former President Fidel Ramos on Dec. 27, a few days after Ramos described as a "monumental blunder" the proposal of the Constitutional Consultative Commission to scrap elections in 2007.

Ermita said Ramos had invited him and presidential political adviser Gabriel Claudio to a meeting in the former President's office at the Urban Bank building in Makati City after greeting him over the phone on Christmas Day.

Ermita said he also brought along Concom chair Jose Abueva and Concom officials Romela Bengzon and Carmen Pedrosa. They explained to Ramos what took place during deliberations on Charter change proposals, including the voting on the no election proposal.

"We can see that among the things that were cleared up with President Ramos was the suspicion that the result of the work of the Concom was a precooked idea, meaning dictated from the Palace," he said. "And we had to inform the former President that was not true." *Christine O. Avendaño*

Muñoz-Palma: Her words now enshrined in history

From page A1

Muñoz-Palma, who died on Monday at 92, was one of two justices of the Supreme Court who dissented from its decision to have former Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. tried by a military tribunal. (The other was Claudio Teehankee.)

Aquino, who was among the hundreds of oppositionists arrested and detained when Ferdinand Marcos imposed martial law in September 1972, had petitioned the high court to transfer him to a civilian court on grounds that he was a civilian.

In an article on Muñoz-Palma in the book "100 Women of the Philippines," the first Filipino woman justice of the Supreme Court explained why she dissented: "There rose before my eyes this gruesome specter of one, a hundred, a thousand civilian Filipinos being dragged by the mighty arms of the military before its own created and manned tribunals ... for offenses, real or imaginary, and tried and sentenced without the constitutional safeguards attendant to a trial by the civil court."

Diokno's release

Muñoz-Palma's other "test" case was her dissenting opinion on the continued detention of former Sen. Jose Diokno.

Also arrested at the onset of martial law, Diokno petitioned for his release on grounds that he had not been formally charged after more than two years.

THE ACTIVIST for justice and human rights, Cecilia Muñoz-Palma, is now at rest and reaping the accolades that she richly deserves.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Muñoz-Palma was the only justice of the high court who backed Diokno's release, thereby directly opposing Marcos.

Her dissenting opinion read in part: "I am bothered by the thought that some of my colleagues may attribute my approach to Diokno's petition to my being a woman, and I may even be accused of allowing my emotions to overpower my reason.

"If there is such an assumption, I would say that it is incorrect. However, if it is indeed true that my being a woman led me to take this stand ... then I am happy and proud that I was born a woman."

Again in the book "100 Women ...," Muñoz-Palma recounted how she took refuge with the nuns at St. Scholastica's College, her high school alma mater, after submitting her dissenting opinion.

She would find out later that the military, in looking for her, even searched her parents' house in Bauan, Batangas.

For opposing Marcos who appointed her to the high court in 1973, she would be branded an "ingrate" by his lackeys.

In her memoirs, "The Mirror of my Soul," Muñoz-Palma explained why she stood up to Marcos: "My oath of office is an oath of loyalty to the Constitution, to justice and the people, and is not an oath of fealty to the appointing power."

Resonance

Muñoz-Palma's words acquire resonance even to this day.

In 1975, she told an audience of her peers and other members of the bar on Law Day: "We shall be judged by history ... not by what we want to do and can't, [but] by what we ought to do and don't."

In 1986, after newly installed President Corazon Aquino appointed her head of the Constitutional Commission, Muñoz-Palma made a promise in her acceptance speech: "to create a Constitution founded on the solid rock of equality, justice, liberty and peace, reminding the people that it is they who have the final responsibility to give life to the Constitution."

Before the year ended, she would make another speech upon the completion of the drafted Charter: "For the first time in the history of constitution-making, 'love' is enshrined in the fundamental law. This is most significant at this period in our national life when the nation is bleeding under the forces of hatred and violence."

Being a woman

Muñoz-Palma was a maverick and a pioneer. She was the first female district judge, the first female prosecutor, the second woman to sit in the Court of Appeals.

But she was also human. Writing home after being assigned to a court outside Manila for the first time, she said she missed her family so much that she intended to seek a transfer.

To which her husband Rodolfo replied: "If you give in to your loneliness, it will give the men an excuse to say that women are too fragile and therefore not fit to be judges."

Of course, she stayed on.

In a statement issued on her passing, Chief Justice Artemio V. Panganiban said in part:

"Justice Muñoz-Palma's death bereaves not only her family and the judiciary but also the entire Filipino nation to whom she has brought much honor and whom she has served so faithfully and well and with singular longevity, long after many of her contemporaries have faded away.

"Even more laudable than her already impressive achievements is the exemplary manner with which Justice Muñoz-Palma had lived her life and the courage by which she had stood by her convictions, most notably in the dark days of martial law. Indeed for us who follow in her footsteps in the judiciary, she is a magisterial model of independence, integrity, industry, and intelligence, my four 'ins' of what a judge should be."

Muñoz-Palma's remains will be transferred to the Supreme Court today for a series of necrological services by the Aurora Aragon Foundation, the Zonta Club and the Philippine Tuberculosis Society, among others.

Her daughter, Pearl Palma Cadema, said the burial ceremony would be held on Tuesday starting at 1 p.m. at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City.

Reports from Fe Zamora and Jamie Alarcon, PDI Research

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

200 feared dead in Indon landslide

JAKARTA—A LANDSLIDE UNLEASHED BY heavy rains in Indonesia's mountainous Central Java Wednesday was feared to have left some 200 people dead, police said, as rescuers scrambled to search for survivors.

A torrent of mud slammed into dozens of homes in the village of Cijeruk, 370 km east of the capital Jakarta.

"We suspect there are about 200 people in 120 houses buried in the mud," local chief of police operations Budi said, adding that about 150 police and soldiers were at the scene carrying out rescue operations.

Budi said workers had so far uncovered five dead bodies buried under the landslide, which slammed into houses at about 5 a.m. (2200 GMT Tuesday) after three days of monsoon rains.

Workers used two excavators and hand tools such as spades and hoes to dig into the mound in the hope of finding survivors, he said.

"Residents living at the foot of Mount Raja ... heard a thundering sound before earth caved in," local official Nur Indah told AFP. She said her office estimated about 160 people were buried in 80 homes.

Banjar Negara deputy police chief Gusti Indra Cahyadi told the online Detikcom news agency that the road leading to the village was damaged, hampering efforts to bring in more heavy rescue equipment.

"The road is unstable and subsided, making it very difficult for heavy equipment to reach the area," he was quoted as saying.

He said the area was prone to landslides during the rainy season.

"There have been many landslides but in the past only 10 houses were hit at the most," he said.

The landslide came as rescuers continued to sift through debris and mud in the aftermath of flash floods in East Java province which have killed at least 57 people and left thousands homeless.

"The evacuation of bodies is still continuing. Twenty bodies are still at the scene but they have been included in the tally. We will use a helicopter if land transport is not possible," Teduh Tedjo, who is coordinating police rescue efforts, told AFP by telephone from Jember.

Misdarno, from the disaster coordinating center in East Java's capital Surabaya, said the death toll was still at 57 but added that 17 more people were listed as missing.

"Rescue workers are still combing the affected areas for more victims and trying to evacuate remaining dead bodies," he said. "Bridges have collapsed and the currents are strong so only SAR (search and rescue) workers have the capability to access the areas."

Four villages in Jember district, 800 km east of the capital, were affected. About 5,000 refugees were sheltering in mosques, schools and other government buildings as 400 police and troops built emergency bridges and ferried medical aid, food and water to survivors.

Environmentalists blamed both disasters on rampant illegal logging as well as land conversion for farming on Java, one of the world's most densely populated islands, as they called on the government to take action.

"We can look forward to another disaster if they don't stop (deforestation) and if they don't reforest areas with original species to make new natural forests," Greenpeace Southeast Asia forestry campaigner Hapsoro told AFP.

"This is a sign for the Indonesian government to be more serious."

More than 140 Indonesians were killed in February last year when a garbage slide buried more than 60 houses in a village southwest of Jakarta after days of heavy rains.

In 2003, more than 200 lives were claimed when flash floods tore through Bahorok, a popular riverside resort in North Sumatra. *AFP*

EU holds emergency talks on Russia-Ukraine gas rift

BRUSSELS—THE EU HOLDS EMergency talks on Wednesday to seek ways to secure energy supplies in the face of a Russian-Ukrainian gas dispute that triggered shortages earlier this week.

Russia's gas supplies to Europe returned to normal on Tuesday after European customers complained about delivery shortfalls to a wintry continent when Moscow stopped supplies to Ukraine on Jan. 1 after Kiev rejected a fourfold hike in prices.

Russian and Ukrainian officials met but neither side signaled any softening in the standoff between the two republics which formed the industrial axis of the former Soviet Union.

With Europe highly reliant on Russia for energy, officials from the European Union's 25 member states were expected to discuss how the dispute had affected them and how they could ensure their gas needs were not disrupted in the future.

The officials were also likely to discuss a request for help in negotiations with Russia by Ukraine and Moldova, another former Soviet republic hit by Moscow's decision to raise prices.

The EU's Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs, who will chair the meeting, said the bloc would be interested in helping negotiations if Russia agreed. But he gave no details on what role Brussels could play.

"We expect to also establish some form of community solidarity mechanism in the case if there is a gas disruption. I don't mean in this particular case, but in general," Piebalgs told Reuters.

Russia's state-run Gazprom and Ukraine's Naftogaz Ukrainy gas companies have been invited to give briefings at the meeting, which will also be attended by European industry representatives and consumer groups.

Russia blames Ukraine for refusing to pay the same prices as its European neighbours and has accused Ukraine of stealing gas intended for European customers.

Ukraine says Russia is lying and accuses the Kremlin of punishing it for its pro-West ambitions.

The Kremlin makes no secret of its dislike of the West-leaning stand of Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko, who rose to power a year ago after mass protests forced a rerun of elections initially won by a Moscow-backed candidate.

European countries and the United States have accused Russia of using energy supplies as a political tool.

"We're glad to see that the (gas) flow has been resumed, and we hope that the Russians and the Ukrainians can reach some type of accommodation," said a White House spokesman.

Moscow wants Ukraine to pay $230 per 1,000 cubic meters of gas, up from the current $50 price that is rooted in Soviet-era subsidies, but Ukraine says such a big hike could wreck its weak economy.

Ukraine's gross domestic product may fall by 5 percent and inflation rise to 27-30 percent in 2006 if the price for Russian gas increases to $230, a senior government official was quoted as saying on Tuesday by Unian news agency. *Reuters*

FILE PHOTO in 2001 shows a researcher examining skeletons of the Napoleonic soldiers discovered in a mass grave on a building site in Vilnius. AFP

US seeks dismissal of terror cases

WASHINGTON—THE US JUSTICE Department will seek to dismiss more than 180 cases involving inmates at Guantanamo Bay who have challenged their detention in court, court documents showed on Tuesday.

The department filed a notice to judges presiding over the cases at the US District Court in Washington to advise them that by the end of next week the Justice Department would file official motions to dismiss the cases.

The notice comes a week after President George W. Bush signed new legislation banning cruel and inhumane treatment of prisoners. The anti-torture law also curbs the ability of prisoners being held at the US Naval Base in Cuba to challenge their detention in federal court.

The legislation requiring humane treatment of detainees in US custody was originally opposed by the White House. But Bush backed off his original veto threats after Congress voted overwhelmingly to support the amendment, pushed by Sen. John McCain, an Arizona Republican who was a prisoner of war in Vietnam.

In a concession to the White House, the bill limits prisoners from going to lower-level civilian courts for relief from confinement. They can only go to an appeals court once they have gone through a military court process.

The US has faced criticism at home and abroad for treatment of prisoners at Guantanamo and for holding prisoners indefinitely. Only nine of about 500 prisoners being held at the base have been charged, and the United States has been holding prisoners there since January 2002. *Reuters*

Scientist forced women for eggs—TV

SEOUL—A SOUTH KOREAN SCIentist whose work on tailored embryonic stem cells has been discredited, coerced junior female colleagues on his team to donate their own eggs for his research, a television network reported late on Tuesday.

A spokesperson for Seoul National University said on Wednesday its panel investigating Hwang Woo-suk for scientific fraud would not comment on the allegation until it releases its final findings next week.

Hwang, who claimed in a landmark 2005 paper he had made a breakthrough in therapeutic cloning research, was dealt a devastating blow last week by the panel, which said none of his work, published in the journal Science, could be proved.

Junior female researchers felt compelled to subject themselves to painful procedures to extract eggs and contribute to Hwang's research out of fear they would otherwise be excluded from academic recognition, a member of his team told MBC TV.

"She said she told Professor Hwang she wouldn't go through with the procedure, and she said Professor Hwang got upset and said, 'Why not?'" said one researcher, speaking about a colleague on the team.

"She was worried, and it was out of worry that she decided to donate her eggs," said the researcher, whose appearance and voice were altered in the TV interview to shield her identity.

The donor went back to Hwang's laboratory and conducted the cloning experiment on the eggs that she herself had contributed that morning, her colleague said.

"I hope I can forgive myself for not being able to stand up to the professor," the donor wrote in an e-mail message, provided to MBC.

MBC TV has closely followed questions about Hwang's research and reported in November that the scientist purposely withheld information about the source of the eggs used in his study.

Hwang has been in seclusion since he resigned from Seoul National University on Dec. 23. He did not comment on the latest report. *Reuters*

Lice destroyed Napoleon's army in Russia, say scientists

PARIS—THE HISTORY BOOKS say that after reaching Moscow in 1812, Napoleon's army was laid low by the Russian winter and then finished off by hunger, battle wounds and low morale as it straggled back to France.

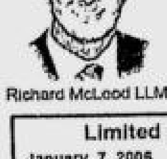
The truth, say scientists, is more intriguing but rather less poetic: the biggest destroyer of the Grande Armee was *Pediculus humanus*—the human louse.

A team led by Didier Raoult of France's National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) examined the remains of Napoleon's soldiers who had been buried in a mass grave in Vilnius, the Lithuanian capital, 800 km west of Moscow.

Samples of earth, cloth and teeth recovered from the site suggest that more than 30 percent of these troops were killed by bacterial fever transmitted by lice.

The parasites caused relapsing fever, through the bacterium *Borrelia recurrentis*; trench fever, a condition well known in the Western Front of World War I, caused by the germ *Bartonella quintana*; and typhus, caused by the *Rickettsia prowazeki* bacterium.

The evidence comes from remains of the fleas that were found in the common grave and in the soldiers' uniforms, and from the presence of Bartonella quintana in some of the fleas themselves. *AFP*



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Top Republican lobbyist pleads guilty to fraud

WASHINGTON—A TOP REPUBLICAN LOBBYIST pleaded guilty on Tuesday to conspiracy, fraud and tax evasion in a case which could lift the lid on one of the most explosive US political corruption scandals in decades.

"Words will not ever be able to express my sorrow for this," Jack Abramoff, 46, said at a brief appearance in US District Court, where he expressed "profound regret for the multitude of mistakes and harm I have caused.

"I only hope that I can merit forgiveness from the Almighty and those I have wronged," said the former powerbroker in the dollar-soaked Washington lobbying community.

The guilty plea followed days of negotiations between Abramoff's lawyers and prosecutors and sets the stage for his cooperation in an investigation which threatens a number of powerful members of the US Congress, including Tom Delay, the former Republican majority leader of the House of Representatives.

Abramoff could face up to 30 years in prison and restitution of $25 million but is expected to receive a significantly lesser sentence in exchange for his testimony against former associates in Congress and their aides. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Hopes dim for ice rink victims

BAD REICHENHALL, Germany—Hopes of rescuing a woman and three youths feared trapped under the collapsed roof of a German ice rink began to fade on Tuesday, just hours after the bodies of 11 dead were recovered. Chief fire officer Rudi Zeif said there had been no signs of life from the woman and three youths, aged 12 to 16, that officials believe are still trapped under the rubble some 30 hours after the roof collapsed on Monday. Reuters

China confirms bird flu in Sichuan

BEIJING—China has suffered its first bird flu outbreak among poultry in Sichuan, the nation's third-most populous province and a major agricultural base, the government said Wednesday. A disease that killed 1,800 birds in a village in Dazhu county in the southwest Chinese province in late December was confirmed as the H5N1 virus by government researchers Tuesday, the agriculture ministry said on its website. "It's the first ever outbreak of bird flu in Sichuan," said an official with the provincial livestock bureau, who declined to be named. AFP

Race against time at W. Virginia mine

TALLMANSVILLE, W.Va.—Rescue workers raced against time on Tuesday with fading hopes of saving 13 trapped coal miners, and officials said it would take a miracle for the men to be found alive. There had been no communication with the miners since they were trapped after an explosion at 6:30 a.m. (1130 GMT) on Monday at the Sago mine in central West Virginia. Officials, who reported poisonous gas in the mine, feared Tuesday night offered the last hope of finding survivors. Rescuers had dug 3,400 meter into the mine. Reuters

Eight Iraqis killed in US air raid

BAIJI, Iraq—At least eight Iraqis, including two children, were killed when a US plane bombed a residential house in northern Iraq where insurgents were believed to be hiding, Iraqi and US officials said Tuesday. The US military Tuesday confirmed it attacked a house in Baiji, 200 km north of Baghdad, late Monday after an unmanned drone spotted three men planting a roadside bomb and then fleeing into the building. "The individuals were assessed as posing a threat to Iraqi civilians and coalition forces, and the location of the three men was relayed to close air support pilots," said US military spokesperson Lt. Col. Barry Johnson. AFP

US warns Iran against resuming atomic research

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED STATES warned Iran on Tuesday against resuming atomic fuel research and development next week in what could become a showdown over the West's suspicions that Tehran wants to build a nuclear bomb.

The United States suspects research and development work that Iran said would resume on Jan. 9 could help what Washington believes is Tehran's pursuit of a nuclear weapon, State Department spokesperson Sean McCormack told reporters.

"If Iran takes any further enrichment-related steps, the international community will have to consider additional measures to restrain Iran's nuclear ambitions," he said, without specifying what action the United States wanted.

Tehran denies seeking nuclear weapons and says its atomic programs are for peaceful power generation.

Patrick Clawson, of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said European powers have in the past made it clear they would not tolerate Iran restarting nuclear research.

And the United States would use any resumption to rally other powers, such as Russia, to adopt its harder line against Iran, he said.

"The resumption will be a real Rubicon for the Iranians to cross," he said. "It has been expected for months that this could be a real galvanizing moment for the international community (against Iran)."

The United States has made curbing Iran's nuclear programs a top foreign policy goal. For months, it has been pressing for Iran to be referred to the United Nations Security Council for possible sanctions because it says Iran has failed to dispel suspicions it is building a nuclear bomb.

International resistance to such a referral has gradually been eroding as Iran has taken an increasingly hard line insisting on its right to develop peaceful nuclear programs.

Earlier on Tuesday, Iran said it would resume nuclear research and development, which it suspended as part of an agreement with Britain, France and Germany two years ago to defuse international pressure over its atomic ambitions.

Such work may include the manufacture and assembly of centrifuges used for uranium enrichment, the most sensitive part of the nuclear fuel cycle. It could also include some small-scale enrichment tests.

Diplomats said Tuesday's announcement, which followed Iran's resumption of uranium conversion in August, was a serious blow to diplomatic efforts to resolve the dispute.

McCormack said: "In terms of trying to draw a line around something being pure research with respect to enrichment activities, (that) is not something that we're going to buy, and I don't think the international community will either." European powers have been leading negotiations to curb Iran's programs in return for economic incentives.

The diplomatic focus in recent weeks has been on a compromise proposal in which Iran would enrich uranium in Russia. That would allow Iran to develop programs for power generation but allay Western fears that the Islamic Republic could get its hands on bomb-grade, highly enriched uranium.

With Iran's Foreign Ministry strongly hinting Tehran would reject the proposal, the United States also complained on Tuesday that Iran was using stalling tactics.

"The Iranians have really done, sort of, a bob-and-weave on this issue," McCormack said.

"They have been seeking to extend out discussions, not really commit to whether or not they are going to negotiate in a serious manner. And, frankly, the patience of the international community is not infinite on this issue because it's a serious issue." *Reuters*

THIS FILE picture shows Iranian Turkman fishermen using a net to pull a Beluga sturgeon onto their boat in the Caspian Sea, off the Iranian port of Bandar Turkman. AFP

UN freezes int'l trading of caviar from sturgeon

GENEVA—A UNITED NATIONS body on Tuesday slapped a freeze on exports of caviar from wild sturgeon, saying the move was essential to protect the endangered fish that produces the gourmet eggs.

It is now up to exporting nations to come forward with new proposals if they want to restart the money-spinning commerce.

Every year, the Convention on International Trade in Engandered Species (CITES) asks caviar producing countries for a quota for the following year's catch.

CITES, a UN organization grouping 169 countries, said it could not approve the 2006 quotas proposed by major exporting nations, saying they "may not fully reflect the reductions in stocks or make sufficient allowance for illegal fishing."

"Since the CITES system only allows sturgeon products to be exported during the year in which they are harvested and processed, as of now it is not possible to export caviar and other sturgeon products from shared stocks," the organization said.

It was referring to natural habitats shared between several nations, mainly the five around the Caspian Sea: Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan. Fish-farmed sturgeon are unaffected.

Officials at the UN organization said CITES could end the freeze if it received satisfactory new proposals but did not give a timetable. *AFP*

Global warming 55M years ago shifted currents

PARIS—AN EXTRAORDINARY BURST OF global warming that occurred around 55 million years ago dramatically reversed Earth's pattern of ocean currents, a finding that strengthens modern-day concern about climate change, a study says.

The big event, the Palaeocene/Eocene Thermal Maximum (PETM), saw the planet's surface temperature rise by between five and eight degrees C in a very short time, unleashing climate shifts that endured tens of thousands of years.

Scientists Flavia Nunes and Richard Norris of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in California explored how these warmer temperatures might have affected ocean currents.

They measured carbon-13 isotopes from 14 cores that had been drilled into the deep floor in four different ocean basins, taking samples from sediment layers deposited before, during and after the PETM.

These isotopes are considered to be an indicator of the nutrients deposited by the water at the time. The higher the isotope value, the likelier that the source came from the deep ocean, the prime source for nutrients.

With a painstaking reconstruction, Nunes and Norris found that the world's ocean current system did a U-turn during the PETM—and then, ultimately, reversed itself.

Before the PETM, deep water upwelled in the southern hemisphere; over about 40,000 years, the source of this upwelling shifted to the northern hemisphere; it took another 100,000 years before recovering completely.

What unleashed the PETM is unclear. Most fingers of blame point to volcanic eruptions that disgorged gigatons of carbon dioxide, or coastal reservoirs of methane gas, sealed by icy soil, that were breached by warmer temperatures or receding seas.

The huge temperature rise may have occurred within just few thousand years, but as Nunes and Norris point out, the effects were enduring and the lesson for mankind today is clear.

"Modern CO2 input to the biosphere from fossil fuel sources is approaching that estimated for the PETM, raising concerns about future climate and circulation change," they warn.

"The PETM example shows that anthropogenic (1/8)man-made(3/8) forcing may have lasting effects not only in global climate but in deep-ocean circulation as well." *AFP*

Archaeologists find oldest known irrigation canals in S. America

LIMA—IN PERU'S ANDEAN FOOTHILLS A group of archaeologists say they have found remnants of the oldest known irrigation canals in South America, which they hope will provide clues to the origin of the region's agriculturally based societies.

"There are four sites in the area that have canals that date minimally 5,300 years ago, maybe a little earlier," team leader Tom D. Dillehay, an archaeologist at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, told The Associated Press.

Dillehay started his research nearly 30 years ago in the Zana Valley, 60 km inland from the Pacific Ocean and about 620 km northwest of Lima.

The conclusions, reported in a recent issue of The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences—a peer reviewed publication of the Washington-based National Academy of Sciences—offer evidence, long suspected by archaeologists, that irrigation technology was critical to the development of Peru's early civilization, Dillehay said.

"The Zana Valley canals are the earliest known in South America," wrote the authors of the journal article, Dillehay, Herbert H. Eling Jr. of the National Institute of Anthropology and History in Mexico and Jack Rossen of Ithaca College.

Dr. Daniel Morales, director of the school of archaeology at Peru's San Marcos University, said he had not seen the article, but was familiar with Dillehay's work. He said the "discovery of the Zana canals is very important because it could be linked to the first form of irrigated agriculture" in Peru.

Dillehay, in a telephone interview from Chile, said the team first discovered some of the canals and agricultural features in 1985 and dated them for the first time in 1989.

But he said his team waited until now to publish its findings to better understand the hydraulic engineering of the hunters and gatherers who made a historic break from their ancestors to tend "early gardens." *AP*

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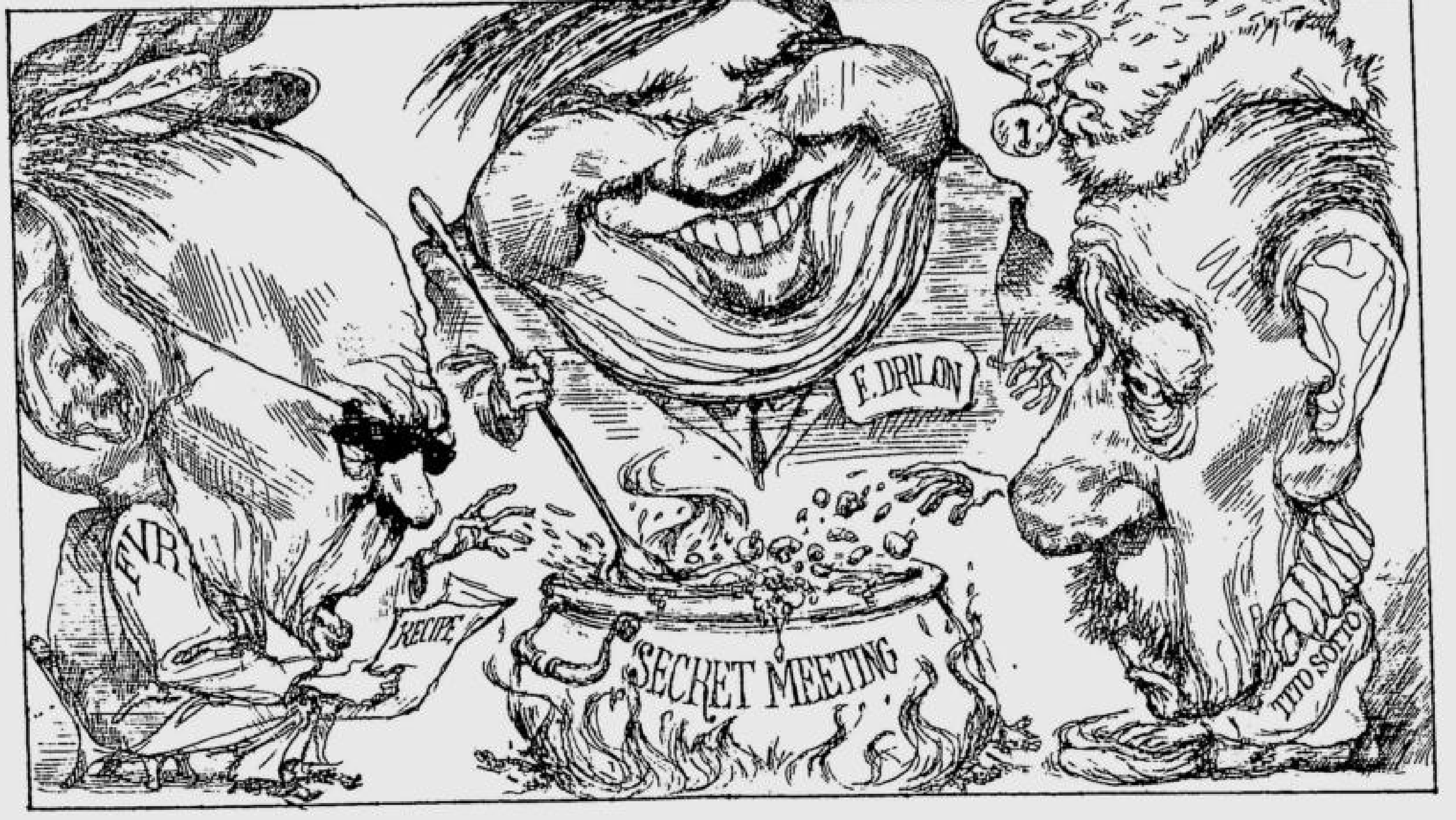

Idle boast

Editorial

THE CRIME RATE DROPPED SHARPLY IN 2005, according to the Department of of Interior and Local Government. This was especially true of car thefts, bank and highway robberies, hijackings, illegal gambling and street crime, the DILG said. Car thefts, for instance, fell sharply to 945 last year from 1,440 the year before. "The police, with the strong backing of the community, are slowly winning the war against criminality (and) making our society and streets peaceful and crime-free," Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes declared.

Maybe Reyes would not have crowed so fast and so loud if he looked a little closer at the crime picture. First, while certain crimes were reduced, there were others whose numbers went up. Kidnapping cases, for one, went up to 63 in 2005, from 46 in 2004, according to the anti-crime watchdog Kaisa para sa Kaunlaran. What is the score in regard to other "index crimes"?

Second, for certain crimes whose incidence went down, the gravity of those that did happen last year might have been greater. While bank robberies were cut to 22 in 2005, for example, the total take from these capers was P90 million. The year before, bank robbers struck 41 times, but ran away with only P59 million.

Third, the police cannot claim full credit for the fall in the number of car thefts that Reyes seemed so proud about. While the number of cases in 2004 was cut by more than one-third last year, less than half of the 945 vehicles stolen were actually recovered by the police or their owners. That doesn't look like good police work, any way one looks at the information.

Fourth, the most likely cause of the sharp reduction in official crime statistics may not be that fewer crimes are being committed but fewer and fewer citizens are reporting crimes. Pulse Asia, in a recent survey of 1,200 people, found that 15 out of every 100 people, or a total of 180 among those surveyed, claimed to have been victims of crime. But then 4 out of every 5 victims didn't go to the police.

What these figures say is that official crime statistics are a most inaccurate and unreliable gauge of the overall peace and order situation. If only 1 out of every 5 crime victims go to the police to complain, then the crime rates recorded by the police will have to be multiplied five times to get closer to the reality.

But these figures have even more disturbing implications than just boosting the actual rate of criminality. They cry out to ask the most logical question: Why do victims shy away from reporting the crimes to the police? Were the crimes perhaps too petty to waste one's time and effort to file a case? This could well be the reason in a good number of cases, since more than half of unreported cases involved burglary. But what about the more serious crimes? Were the victims loath to report them because they didn't trust the police? Was it because they didn't have the resources—the money to hire lawyers especially—to bring their tormentors to justice? Or had they completely lost confidence in our justice system?

It is unfortunate that Pulse Asia didn't bother to find out the reasons for the failure of the overwhelming majority of victims to report crimes. These would have been more useful than mere crime statistics. But the DILG and the police should pick up where the private pollster left off and try to determine why there is so much reluctance to report crimes. More than the usual self-laudatory yearend reports, finding the reasons and addressing them will go a long way in reducing the crime rate.

Dubious practices

Foreign Comment

THE BREWING CONTROVERSY INVOLVING THE ALLEGED abduction and interrogation of five Pakistani immigrants living in Greece raises a number of crucial questions. The law, of course, gives the intelligence services the power to interrogate terrorism suspects. Nevertheless the authorities chose the illicit path in a way that does not appear to be an accident.

It seems that politicians are to blame but for more than just illicit actions by secret agents. Such practices are not exclusive to Greece's intelligence services. Under pressure to combat international terrorism, many European governments have yielded to the temptation of tolerating and in some cases giving the green light to dubious practices.

The state's image is valuable and it must be protected by all, most crucially by its functionaries. And herein lies the crux of the matter. The ease with which legal proceedings have been violated is just one side to the problem. The other, an equally sad sight, is the ease with which names, rumors and scenarios began to circulate.

Kathimerini (Athens, Greece)

'No basta decir adios'

Viewpoint

Juan L. Mercado

"FEW DIE AND NONE RESIGN," THOMAS Jefferson griped in an 1801 letter. And in 2006, pirates in our Commission on Elections refuse to die. Nor is anyone quitting.

Embattled election commissioners instead scoff at Senate Blue Ribbon Committee Report No. 44. Crafted by Sen. Joker Arroyo, the 22-page document reveals how poll officials handcuffed a nation to fraud-marred manual vote counts while looting the treasury.

Arroyo is the savvy prosecutor who, as the nation stood glued to TV screens, nailed down the "Jose Velarde" bank accounts at the Estrada impeachment trial. He brings the same incisive skills to bear in SR 44.

Did former Commissioners Luzviminda Tancangco and Ralph Lantion believe that retirement provides immunity? *No basta decir adios*, SR 44 says. It's not enough to say goodbye.

The committee demands that they be prosecuted for the "manipulated bidding" of the P1.3-billion Mega Pacific Consortium contract. Its computers flubbed Department of Science and Technology tests. They were mothballed in the May 2004 elections.

Tancangco, Lantion, Mehdol Sadain and Rufino Javier were the Comelec's "Gang of Four," asserted the Cebu Daily News on June 19, 2002. Appointed by President Joseph Estrada, these "mediocrities paralyzed Comelec…by boycotting 42 percent of sessions," freezing papers of 156 election officers and reinstating those fired for corruption.

Why did yesterday's budding abuses metastasize into full-blown scandals today, graphically documented by SR 44?

A partisan House committee on justice, in the previous Congress, sabotaged an early impeachment charge against Tancangco for the abuses that SR 44 scrambles to correct three years later.

Representatives Marcelo Libanan and Wilfredo Villarama led 36 Estrada lawmakers who refused to even look at the charges. They "opted not to explain their votes," House Committee Report 1099 notes. This fractured Rule III, in their own Rules of Procedure.

"If government becomes a law breaker, it breeds contempt for the law," US Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis once wrote. "It invites every man to become a law unto himself."

So, yesterday's swindles spiraled into today's payback. *No basta decir adios.* Thus, SR 44 seeks the prosecution of Comelec Bids and Awards Committee members Eduardo Mejos (chair), Gideon de Guzman, Bartolomeo Sinocruz, Lamberto Llamas and Jose Balbuena (now retired).

The BAC tailored criteria to suit Mega Pacific Consortium, a firm incorporated 11 days before deadline, SR 44 found. That the "winning bidder" couldn't submit three-year financial statements, as required, was shrugged off. And specifications were altered in mid-stream as computers conked out.

Commissioners are not psychics. Yet, they awarded the contract six days before they received the BAC's April 21, 2003 written recommendation. That, as my barber says, is *lutong makaw*.

"The illegal, imprudent and hasty actions of the Commission…cast serious doubts upon the poll body's ability and capacity to conduct automated elections," the Supreme Court ruled in January. "Truly, the pith and soul of democracy—credible, orderly and peaceful elections—has been put in jeopardy by the illegal and gravely abusive acts of Comelec."

The Court thus pinpointed what bugs people. As constituted today, the Comelec may perform by racketeer Al Capone's standard: "Vote early—and vote often."

SR 44 doubts if the current Comelec leadership can conduct credible polls. Polls are set for 2007. And there could be a possible referendum on constitutional change. Would you entrust that process to Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. and Commissioners Resurreccion Borra, Mehol Sadain, Florentino Tuazon Jr. and Rufino Javier?

The whole Senate won't. It adopted SR 44's recommendation that the commissioners quit—with the exception of former Court of Appeals Felix Brawner, appointed only in September. "In God we trust," the skeptics say. "All others we virus scan."

President Macapagal-Arroyo aggravated the mess left by Estrada's "Gang of Four" with her choice of Benjamin Abalos, Virgilio Garcillano et al., noted this column in June 2004. "Overhauling a Comelec of depreciated credibility commands priority—and enjoys rare consensus."

A Jeffersonian mass resignation at the Comelec would enable the President to reverse her habit of deadbeat appointees. "A new broom sweeps clean."

In the new year, will she appoint, at last, persons in the mould of incorruptible past commissioners, like the late Rodrigo Perez Jr., Haydee Yorac, Ramon Felipe, Christian Monsod and just-retired Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr.? "A good man protects three villages," the Chinese proverb says.

This is crucial. Road blocks to computerized polls are far more deeply embedded than they seem. There's evidence that the primitive manual counts suit politicians just fine, the Japan Times has noted.

In the current budget, "there's no allocation for election automation, as provided by a 1997 law," INQUIRER's Solita Monsod has noted. Nor is any effort made to set aside funds for automation.

The Comelec, meanwhile, pays P3.9 million in storage fees every year for kaput computers. It has not collected the illegal advances it made. And it wants another P1.3 billion to purchase new counting machines.

"I won't resign," Abalos says.

Come 2007, the manual count may resurface. And Nicaraguan dictator Anastacio Somoza's rule of thumb would haunt us: "You won the elections but I won the count."

Sign up now for that Internet petition demanding that Abalos & Cronies walk the plank, remembering: *No basta decir adios.*

* * *

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Even closer than we think

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

IT WAS ALMOST EXACTLY A YEAR AGO WHEN I wrote a couple of pieces expressing alarm at what was happening to the world's climate. I am by no means an expert or an exceptionally knowledgeable person about climatic changes, but I don't know that one has to be so to notice the havoc Nature has been causing the world these last few years.

When I wrote the columns last year, two horrifying natural disasters had just taken place. Close to home, a typhoon had struck the eastern seaboard of Luzon and buried Infanta, Quezon, in floods and mudslides. The scale of devastation was such that a couple of weeks later, they were still pulling mud-caked bodies out from the earth. Mt. Carmel became a virtual headquarters for relief operations.

Barely had the last wail issued from the place when an even greater tragedy struck, one that laid low several countries. A colossal tidal wave, or tsunami, engulfed the shores of countries along the Indian Ocean, followed by a killer earthquake. "Catastrophe" seemed too weak a word to describe it, tragicomic images like that of cars perched on rooftops in the aftermath offering a glimpse of the fury. The death toll was mind-boggling, more than a hundred and fifty thousand people, half of them in Banda Aceh, Sumatra, alone killed. Several villages were wiped out overnight, as the wall of water crashed upon them without warning.

Shortly after I wrote this, a couple of readers complained that I was being alarmist, that the scientific facts showed my apocalyptic fears were completely unfounded. Well, 2005 proved an even more plentiful year for natural disasters, most Americans, readers of newspapers and viewers of TV ranking Hurricane Katrina as the No. 1 story of the year. Before that disaster struck, George W. Bush had just made a big show of leading the relief effort in Aceh and neighboring places. Katrina would soon show Nature did not reserve its wrath only for the poor countries of the world. Overnight, a part of the American heartland itself metamorphosed into a Third World country, yielding scenes you previously saw only in countries in Africa and Asia.

I saw a chilling footage of the disaster on CNN shortly before the New Year. A native of New Orleans was trying to rebuild his home by selling a videotape he took of the ordeal he went through. CNN had just bought it. The video began with ferocious winds that bent trees and hurled cars this way and that, and went on to chronicle the ascent of the floodwaters into the man's upper floors. You can imagine how it must have felt to watch that creeping death come to you. The man himself did not think he would survive it. One of his last shots showed the neighborhood sunk in water with only the rooftops of a house or two and a steeple standing. Happily, the man did survive it: The waters stopped rising before they got to him.

As it was though, the hurricane would be nothing compared to the storm that would soon be unleashed on American officials. Overnight, Bush's ratings plummeted to an all-time low for bungling the response, the preponderant black community in particular demanding to know what he was doing in Iraq when the one place he needed to rebuild was right under his nose. To this day, Bush has yet to rebuild his now completely disaster-ed image.

A couple of months later, a killer earthquake struck Pakistan around the Kashmir region. How much of a killer it was you see from the toll: 38,000 dead, 60,000 injured, 3.3 million rendered homeless. The wailing and sounds of grief can be heard even now.

Those were just two of the worst disasters last year. There were others, including hurricanes in various parts of the world—last year was a record in the United States, 27, breaking the record which stood at 21 in 1933—typhoons across Asia, famine and food shortages in Africa from bitter drought and sudden cold spells.

Alarmist? Well, as Bill Blakemore of ABC News points out, "alarmist" is defined by the American Heritage Dictionary as "one who needlessly alarms others." Today, the alarm bells are being sounded by scientists themselves. In a meeting in Brooklin, Canada, last month, they revealed the following: 2005 was the hottest year in modern times; the impact of climate change was coming faster than expected; satellite photos show there is 20 percent less Arctic ice today than in 1978, a speed of melting unprecedented in history ("the Arctic is a major driver for the earth's weather cycle"); a study shows over half of the northern hemisphere's permafrost would melt by 2050, unleashing billions of tons of methane, a greenhouse gas more potent than carbon dioxide, which would dramatically accelerate global warming; Greenland lost 162 cubic kilometers of ice each year from 2002 to 2005, higher than all previous estimates, contributing to rising sea levels; and so on.

Scientists agree on one thing: It will take more than the Kyoto Protocol to arrest the dying of the planet. "Carbon emissions will need to fall by 80 or 90 percent, rather than 5 or 10 percent, to have an effect on the models. In terms of a response, Kyoto is only a start," says Guy Brasseur, head of the Hamburg-based Max Planck Institute for Meteorology. As it is, the United States refuses to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. Nasa's Dr. James Hansen sounds a note of urgency. We only have a window of 10 more years to drastically cut carbon emissions before we turn the planet into the hottest it's ever been since the last 500,000 years.

Do we really need these dire warnings to realize how messed up the climate has gotten? We don't add our voices to the chorus demanding steep cutbacks in carbon emissions, the epitaph of this planet will soon read, "Laid low by the greatest disaster of them all: Human Folly."

Let's not sow instability when things are looking up

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE MEETING OVER RED WINE AT FORMER President Fidel V. Ramos' penthouse office at Urban Bank between him, Senate President Franklin Drilon and former Sen. Vicente Sotto can't be regarded as a mere New Year's social. It has to be taken in the light of certain events. Notable is the Jan. 1 "deadline" FVR set for President Macapagal-Arroyo to come up with a definitive stand on the transitory provision in the draft constitution crafted by the Consultative Commission calling for the cancelation of the 2007 elections. He has termed No-El a "monumental blunder" and sought a categorical rejection of the idea from her. Recall that six months ago, he had also asked her to "sacrifice" by stepping down in 2007 to give way to a new set of leaders in a new parliament.

* * *

Over the holidays, however, GMA kept silent on this "deadline." Thus the meeting at Urban Bank may be his way of expressing peeve at her snub. Inside sources say that holding elections in 2007 or doing away with them is acceptable to GMA either way since her term doesn't end until 2010. But it's also said that she'd rather not discuss this subject openly because she does not want to alienate her ardent local government supporters who understandably favor No-El. But FVR, who's perceived to have "saved" her presidency last July 8, is unhappy about her silence.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, in yesterday's Palace press conference, downplayed the Ramos "deadline" and meeting by pointing out that FVR got a briefing at his residence last Dec. 27 from ConCom Chair Jose Abueva and other commissioners regarding this provision. Ermita said the purpose was to let FVR hear it straight from the horse's mouth and convince him that GMA had nothing to do with it. Apparently, he was not convinced.

* * *

The Urban Bank meeting is significant because it brought two people who owe big debts of gratitude to Cory Aquino: FVR, her anointed presidential candidate in 1992; and Drilon, who held several Cabinet positions in her government. Until now the "centrist" opposition to GMA, led by Aquino and Drilon, has failed to take off, despite the Black and White Movement's avowal to install the latter as "acting president" after Noli de Castro spurned its offer of leadership. Drilon just doesn't excite politically. But if FVR were to join them, he could conceivably unify the opposition against GMA.

* * *

Pundits speculate that FVR, in meeting with Drilon, who heads the Liberal Party, and Sotto, who represents the Estrada faction of the opposition, may be forging alliances to enable him to take hold of power as "transitional prime minister." This speculation runs counter to his public avowals at Lakas meetings for younger leaders to take over from the senior generation. Few, however, would probably doubt that hope still springs in the heart of this old but still capable ex-military man that he could return to power even in an interim capacity. But this perception has its own pitfall: Since FVR is among the most ardent advocates of a parliamentary shift, his advocacy could be tarred if he's perceived as pushing for himself. It could affect even more his waning popularity, as borne out in a recent poll survey.

* * *

The Ramos factor is loaded with political significance, as he is chair emeritus of the ruling Lakas of which GMA is chair and Speaker Joe de Venecia is president. Where he goes could affect that party. There's also the military connection. But if FVR is asking GMA for sacrifice, I wish he would also do the same. Prospects for the country are looking up and it would not be good to create new political instability. As the Standard Today noted in yesterday's editorial, the peso is at its strongest in nearly three years and the budget deficit has been reduced because of painful fiscal reforms. The dire effects of the E-VAT have been cushioned and the T-bills auction has lower yields because government now has to borrow less from domestic sources. Let's put the parliamentary system in place with the slightest ripple, but this can be done only if our top leaders talk things over and do not threaten each other.

* * *

Talk about an impending reshuffle not just in the Cabinet but also in other government offices is natural at this time of the year and given the need for GMA to strengthen her hand at governance. One of those who should be given a bigger role is the amiable Saeed Daof, former MILF envoy and chair of its economic development committee and currently director general of the Center for the Promotion of Peace and Development in Mindanao (CPPDM). Saeed is one of the few Muslim leaders who truly understand how to resolve the seething conflict in many places between Christians and Muslims. I've followed his advocacy to promote a culture of peace in Mindanao, instead of a "culture of war" or a "culture of conflict." His main instrument is his "Journey to Peace: Understanding Muslim and Christian Commonalities," a series of dialogues the CPPDM began and will continue to carry out in various places. In these dialogues, Saeed seeks to get away from what he calls the "blame-game syndrome" that perpetuates the dichotomy between "them and us," and, worse, the claim to a "monopoly of righteousness of both sides." Saeed's dialogue gets folks from both sides to talk about what they have in common rather than what sets them apart. He involves as "resource persons" various people with extensive experience in the conflict areas, including executives of local and foreign companies that are technology- and development-oriented, thereby removing the stigma of exploitation of the indigenous. Truly he's ready for a bigger role.

* * *

Birthday greetings today to the member of Congress with the reputation for being the thriftiest with people's money, Sen. Joker Arroyo.

Justice Cecilia Muñoz-Palma: Beloved 'ingrata'

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

TO HONOR JUSTICE CECILIA MUÑOZ-PALMA (a fellow Scholastican), who passed away at 92 two days ago, I re-edited the piece I wrote in 2001 when she launched her book, "The Mirror of My Soul." Here it is.

Ingrata. That was how Muñoz-Palma had been harshly called by a high government official. Ingrate. Ungrateful. The Spanish word reeks of contempt and condescension. You do not bite the hand that fed you.

It sounds even harsher in Filipino: *walang utang na loob*. A person who receives help or is accorded honors, even if she deserves them, is presumed deeply indebted and when the time comes, is expected to stand by the favor- or honor-giver. Only the brave in our culture would dare go against this onerous unwritten contract.

But we are not wanting in brave and debt-defying civil servants, one of whom was Muñoz-Palma, the first woman to sit in the Supreme Court (1973-1978). Although the appointing power in her case happened to be a dictator, a.k.a. Ferdinand E. Marcos, she showed him and the sycophants that she owed him nothing. She owed only God and the Filipino people whom she had sworn to serve. By defying expectations and pursuing the rule of law as her conscience dictated, all the more it was evident that this gentle and soft-spoken Batangueña was destined to sit above the throng.

Well, *ingrata* because as an associate justice speaking before her peers and members of the bar on the occasion of Law Day, she pleaded for the return of the rule of law. That was in 1975, the third year of martial rule, and the lady told her audience: "We shall be judged by history ... not by what we want to do and can't, (but) by what we ought to do and don't."

For her guts, she received a five-minute standing ovation. But Justice Secretary Vicente Abad Santos was neither pleased nor amused. He remained seated. *Ingrata*, he called her.

She took that as a compliment, a badge of courage.

Ingrata because she wrote a dissenting opinion on the habeas corpus case of former senator and nationalist Jose W. Diokno. Her opinion would have had embarrassed Marcos, but before it could be presented, it was "frustrated." Muñoz-Palma's written opinion (that had leaked) jumped the gun on the other justices and Marcos, too, and paved the way for the release of Diokno who had been detained for more than 700 days without charges.

Muñoz-Palma called the Diokno case her baptism of fire. And although her dissenting opinion did not see the full light of day as the habeas corpus petition became moot and academic with Diokno's sudden release, it illumined the legal path during those dark and dreadful days.

Muñoz-Palma's "frustrated dissenting opinion" could be read in full in her book, "The Mirror of My Soul: Selected Decisions, Opinions, Speeches and Writings," (883 pages!) which she gave away for free on the occasion of the Supreme Court's 100th anniversary. Her opinion on the Diokno case (with which Associate Justice Calixto Zaldivar concurred) is simple enough for non-lawyers, but it emits a luminous glow if read in the context of those dark years.

She ended that opinion by defending woman power thus: "In closing, I am bothered by the thought that some of my colleagues may attribute my approach to Diokno's petition to my being a woman, and I may even be accused of allowing my emotions to overpower my reason. If there is such an assumption, I would say that it is incorrect. However, if it is indeed true that my being a woman led me to take this stand ... then I am happy and proud that I was born a woman."

More riveting is the intro to that case where Muñoz-Palma describes how she wrote it while in hiding and how she later cloistered herself among the Benedictines of St. Scholastica's College, her alma mater. (She was valedictorian of H.S. Class of '31, after which she went to the University of the Philippines for law studies. She passed the bar in 1937.) If at all she gave in to a colleague who knew what she was up to, it was to erase the words "arbitrary and oppressive" in her dissension.

There was life after the Supreme Court. Muñoz-Palma led the anti-Marcos opposition and ran in the 1984 Batasan Pambansa elections and won by a landslide. Her battle cry: "One Marcos cannot stop us all." She later became the president of the Constitutional Commission that drafted the 1987 Constitution. She headed the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office where she again displayed her being *ingrata* when she did not cover up for the alleged wrongdoing of the president who appointed her.

"The Mirror of My Soul" packs courage. Said the late Chief Justice Marcelo Fernan: "I can still see her standing on the floor of the Batasan... No one can equal the passion with which she fought Amendment No. 6—that curse of presidential usurpation of legislative powers. She was also one of the few among us who dared file articles of impeachment against the then head of government."

Muñoz-Palma tells readers that they "will not find literary gems or grandiose or loftily-worded judicial and legal pronouncements" in her book, only "plain words ... thoughts and ideas and principles emanating from my conscience and reason on faith, truth, justice, freedom and the Rule of Law."

The rule of law—these words were like her mantra. Her "A Plea for the Rule of Law" that earned her the *ingrata* label (and where she also said much about womanhood) is a good read. But one can't miss the spiritual theme that also runs through her writing. Indeed, this woman always hearkened to a higher power, a higher law.

* * *

Send feedback to cerespd@info.com.ph

Revisiting Edsa

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

THIS MONTH BEGINS THE JOURNEY TO THE 20th anniversary of the Edsa Revolution. An entire generation has grown up not knowing what it was like to be thrilled by the impact of Cory Aquino's victory statement on Feb. 8, 1986:

"The Marcos spell is broken. The myth of his invincible machine has been shattered. Against his guns, against his goons, and against his gold, the Filipino people have prevailed. They have made their cry of freedom and justice heard above the torrent of lies and threats.

"A painful price has been paid. Many have been hurt, I am sad to report, and some have died. Let us hope and pray that the tragic reports we have heard are the final price our people must pay for freedom. They have well earned it...

"Nothing can take our victory from us. No power can pry from our hands the freedom we have won this day.

"In 1972, our country was taken from us by force in the dead of night and kept from us by deception. We became exiles in our own land. Now we have our country back. And it is fitting that, as we lost it in darkness, we have regained it in the night.

"We are home again, in a country we can once more call our own. We have won back our country and won it with bravery, sacrifice, honor, and distinction. This night marks our true independence. We owe no one for our freedom but ourselves.

"It is not for me to thank the Filipino people; it is for all of us to welcome ourselves home. *Mabuhay ang Pilipino*."

When the 10th anniversary of Edsa came and went, wistful sadness seems to have engulfed people: so wonderful, yet so brief, was the Edsa era. And today, 20 years after, what do we see? The middle class and business, which applauded and tolerated the dictatorship as long as their pocketbooks continued to grow, have reverted to the cynicism which led them to scorn all kinds of politics for 11 years. Until Ninoy was killed and profits plunged, killing any pretenses on the part of these people that politics could be avoided altogether. Suddenly their indignation was aroused, bringing to mind a saying by Herbert Hoover, arch-apostle of capitalism: "Free speech does not live many hours after free industry and free commerce die."

With the flight of Dewey Dee in 1981, and the declaration of bankruptcy of the government in 1983, it became obvious that free commerce had ceased to be, and the middle discovered that free speech, the right to criticize leaders, was something they missed.

For many years, until their format became obsolete, around Edsa time I would exhume two Betamax tapes, which were originally surreptitiously given to us shortly after Ninoy's funeral. One is of the Japanese television coverage on Ninoy, the other is of a documentary of Ninoy's funeral, composed of footage taken by foreign correspondents. What has always haunted me are the attempts of foreign journalists to get statements from people who stood by the side of the road to watch Ninoy's funeral cortege pass. These people would only shake their heads when asked to talk, except for one man who said, "It's enough for us to stand here."

How do you recapture the atmosphere of fear, of conditioned obedience, which weighed heavily on ordinary people then? It was a time when simply standing by the road was an act of rebellion and bravery. From this small act of independence, the marching would take off, the yellow confetti would rain down on the heads of middle-ranking executives and then their bosses. A rising tide of yellow kitsch would soon sweep away the Queen of Kitsch herself, and her husband, whose evacuation from Malacañang would leave open to the first ruffians who entered it evidence of another evacuation altogether—adult diapers in the sanctum sanctorum of the dictator. After everyone, that is, would converge on a major avenue and mount a massive sit-in which scandalized the Left because of the audacity with which the middle classes had expropriated their methods.

Much of the yellow brick road that led to Edsa was fun, accompanied by Ati-Atihan drums. I remember on New Year's Eve 1986, the last New Year under Marcos. The air was shattered by a barrage of firecrackers that was simply unprecedented. It was as if everyone had gotten it into their heads to demonstrate as clearly as possible that they didn't care a whit for the government's firecracker ban. Of course, the next new year was the quietest, because everyone listened to their new President. The year after wasn't quiet anymore, and the year after that was quiet because of Gringo. Only this New Year was fairly quiet again, because life is hard once more.

The middle class joined midway a fight that had been waged by dedicated people opposed to the dictatorship on principle. They managed to wrest control of the rhetoric and propaganda methods from those who had been battling Marcos in the streets during the First Quarter Storm; and they exulted in victory as the Left grumbled about having missed the bus of history. The proprietary sense the middle class and their political arm, civil society, felt with regard to People Power led to the second Edsa in 2001, but even more so than they did after 1986, power went to their heads, and it all came crashing painfully down mere months after those heady January days, when the third, unofficial Edsa took place.

At that point, it was proven that neither civil society nor the middle class possessed the credibility or the skill to mobilize the many. In fact, they undermined a counter-revolt, which only failed because it was led by Marcos relics who had failed to preserve the Marcoses in 1986.

So have we come full circle? Back to 1972, when, just as it was after 1986, middle forces balked at moving ahead. No wonder everyone is depressed. Are we conditioning ourselves for a time when standing on the side of the road will again be an act of bravery in itself?

Walking

YOUNG BLOOD

Dheza Marie Aguilar

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

I HAD THE MOST EXHILARATING EXPERIENCE THIS morning.

Today I realized how I've missed life's simple joys. And I felt sad to find out that for some time now, I was a prisoner in the city. I was caught in the rat race and became so absorbed with the unending search for money and the pressures of the workplace that I forgot the things I had enjoyed when I was living in the province, alone with the flowers and the butterflies.

Maybe it's one result of my own financial problems or it may be my feeble attempt to help conserve energy, but I have joined MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando's "walking campaign." It has been a week now since I started the practice of walking from my dorm to the jeepney stop, which I used to travel on a pedicab. I save P5 one way or P10 daily, which adds up to P60 weekly and P120 for half a month. The last figure makes up one day's allowance, which I can now add to my savings.

But even more valuable than the money I save from each trip, I have rediscovered that walking makes you notice everything along the way. Even the tiniest dead cockroach I see on the street makes my thoughts fly to parts known and unknown.

Walking has made me thankful that I can eat three meals a day and lie down on a nice, warm bed at night. Many people live in shacks that cannot be much larger than the pigpens I have seen in Marinduque. But it can be so frustrating to realize that much as I want to help them, I can do little more than walk past them every morning since my finances are tight.

The morning walk makes me enjoy the not so fresh air in our neighborhood as well as the morning sunlight on my pale face. It has been a long time since sweat had trickled down my back and my forehead and the feeling can be quite relaxing. Now I know what I missed when I exchanged exercise for a couch, a computer and a boob tube for the longest time!

I feel very light whenever I complete my daily walk to the jeepney stop. It helps to prepare me for the long and exhausting day ahead. I am not a morning person, but walking makes me look forward to every morning now.

True, I have had a relatively smooth life compared to others, but my morning walk is a constant reminder that I haven't really gone far from where I was six years ago. The achievements I chalked up made my parents proud, but they have not been enough to satisfy my proud self. I crave for more—more experience, more pain, more lessons, more life. I don't want to get stuck in the usual hell of the working class and the unsatisfied people. I want to explore the world and know more about myself: what I want to achieve in life, where I am going and when I will stop searching. I want to prove that when you walk farther from home, you move closer to finding your self.

I want to walk farther than the usual trail. I want to walk around the world and think about other things than the shacks of beggars, the long line of pedicabs and the bums hanging out in some corners. I want to discover other shacks, other kinds of transportation and other types of bums all over the world. But sadly, the short distance I have to walk every day may just be all the walking I will have for now. Still, no one knows where my walks in the future will take me. But think I will keep following what the whiskey ad says: Keep walking!

Dheza Marie Aguilar, 21, is a production manager in a small outfit that produces medical programs for a local television network.

Love and the Tomcat

Shelley Jo R. Saracin

I LOVE MY TOMCAT. IT'S ONE OF MY MOST PRECIOUS possessions, different from all the other items I have collected over the course of 24 years.

Since childhood, I have collected trinkets of various kinds: stuffed animals to which I give names, wooden and ceramic sculptures given by close friends, letters from old flames, old coins from globetrotter friends and family members, bills, toys and other memorabilia.

When I began my self-discovery phase in high school and decided that my personality most resembled dolphins, I collected things of all shapes and sizes: bottle openers, a bath mat, curtains, frames, pen and cell-phone holders, jars, earrings, pens and what-have-you. As I grew up, my friends gave me all sorts of tokens. None was as precious as my Tomcat.

My Tomcat is a replica on a 1/100 scale of an F-14 fighter plane, the one used by Tom Cruise in the hit movie, "Top Gun." It was the fastest, most advanced and most efficient fighter of its time. With its movable wings swept backwards, it can streak through the air at more than 1,500 mph, two and a half times faster than the speed of sound. And mine is a beautiful, streamlined replica of the fighter jet, with gray wings and the minutest details.

It came in a slim brown box, filled with green Styrofoam filling, and with a letter carefully taped beneath the box lid. The Tomcat was given with a sheepish, yet excited grin, and as I received it, I was told to flip it over gingerly. Thus was I introduced to the F-14 Tomcat.

The Tomcat was both a birthday and a Christmas gift, given to me two years ago on the night of Dec. 16. In excitement over this new toy, I accidentally broke off one of its fragile wheels that very same night.

When I sadly informed the giver, he immediately restored the wheel to its rightful place.

For almost a year since its "birth," the Tomcat has been posted at my bedside. Later it acquired a "brother," an F-22 Raptor. I have been cleaning it regularly, brushing dust and smudges off its whitewashed body and moving it among my personal belongings.

Every time I clean it, I realize the Tomcat's utter fragility. I always have to hold it with light fingers as I wipe its body with a soft, clean cloth. Its wheels, tiny and delicate, are about as small as the nail on my pinkie. Still I end up taking off one of the wheels with a quick, accidental flick of my finger very often.

Today as I was cleaning it, the tiny black front wheel again came off. I suppressed a tear as I gingerly glued the piece back with the special adhesive that came with the Raptor, all the while thinking how this tiny toy was symbolic of love: Fragile. Precious. Mendable. Lasting.

Because no matter how many times I break off a piece of my Tomcat, no matter how old and dusty it gets, and no matter how much its paint-on details fade, it continues to be precious to me. I will always wipe it clean. I will always know that it is my F-14. I will always look for the special glue that will keep its parts together. I will always hold it with tender, nimble fingers. I will always remember that it means love.

Even if I no longer put it on display and just keep it in a box, I will always, always cherish my fighter friend.

Shelley Jo R. Saracin, 25, is a staff writer at the Asian Seminary of Christian Ministries.

Capturing the spirit of New Year

IT'S AGAIN A NEW YEAR. DON'T you find it strange that what's supposed to be new is feeling like an old, stale thing repeated so many times *ad nauseam*, in an almost mindless routine every year?

That's what is likely to happen if we are not careful. We can harden in our ways, get trapped in our complacency, imprisoned in our ideas, really quite dead although we can manage to look alive and even lively.

Yes, we are quite capable of these things. We are good at hiding and disguising what is inside us. We can go formal, without the substance, often not knowing that this is very toxic to our soul.

Thus, we can drown ourselves in sounds, sights and spirits, all meant to arouse the senses while putting the soul to sleep.

We can go through the routine of resolution-making, if only to pacify for a while our spiritual side that cannot be totally shut off.

But the true spirit of the New Year is somewhere else. It lies in the recognition that in this life, we will always need constant renewal, that life-long process of having to begin and begin again.

It's the recognition that is always a fruit of God's grace. It's a recognition that the renewal expected is far from being merely physical or material. It has to be spiritual.

We need to understand the phenomenon called inertia, which often spoils our efforts to renew ourselves genuinely. In the physical world, inertia is easily observable. It means no variation in things. What is still should remain still. What is moving should remain moving. And this should not be applied to our life.

In our spiritual life, things appear to be always moving. What would constitute inertia is when that motion goes on its own, detached from God who shows the way, sets the pace and makes everything new.

This is what happens in obsession, a repetition of acts driven by a kind of blindness, narrow-mindedness, rigidity, self-righteousness, bitter zeal, self-indulgence, attachment, etc. It differs essentially from virtue which also involves some repetition of acts, because virtue is never blind, rigid and all that. But virtue first of all is always reasonable and imbued with charity, because it starts and ends with God.

Not so obsession. While it can spur a person to constant motion, it's a motion that goes nowhere except to one's perdition. It's vicious, addictive and enslaving.

Virtue builds a person up. It perfects him, much in the way expressed by St. Peter in his second letter:

"Strive diligently to supply your faith with virtue, your virtue with knowledge, your knowledge with self-control, your self-control with patience, your patience with piety, your piety with fraternal love, your fraternal love with charity."

This is what we have to understand very well if we want to capture the true spirit of the New Year.

Happy New Year to all!

—FR. ROY CIMAGALA,
chaplain, Center for Industrial Technology and Enterprise,
Talamban, Cebu City

Records may be scrutinized by anybody

THIS IS IN REACTION TO VICTOR Agustin's Dec. 21, 2005 column which touched again on the projects of the Peace & Equity Foundation (PEF). The information gaps gave us a chance to further report on our work.

The exposure trip to Vietnam (March 2004) focused on village-based technologies for vacuum-drying and -frying of tropical fruits. This technology is not yet readily accessible in the country. Thus, the acquisition of the technology would potentially benefit small farmers, particularly in Cotabato, Davao and Bukidnon.

Meanwhile, the Hong Kong trip in May 2005 familiarized seven participants on commercial-scale sustainable and organic agriculture. The learning from the study trip will be shared with and applied by farmers in Cotabato, Benguet, Negros Occidental and Nueva Vizcaya, who have seen a distinct opportunity in the growing demand for healthful organically grown food in the Philippines and abroad.

To date, farmers' training on sustainable agriculture by the Multisectoral Alliance for Development in Negros Occidental have intensified, while the vacuum-frying technology has been set up to benefit more than 100 rural households of the Maligo Multipurpose Cooperative in Mindanao.

PEF's study-exposure trips provided farmers and community development workers with practical knowledge on different technologies in sustainable agriculture and micro-enterprise development. The participants were selected based on their capacity to echo or transfer what they learn from those trips to the organizations they represent or work with. Advanced knowledge and experience in farming and enterprise development were deemed essential to ensure maximum learning.

Agustin has apparently surfed our website. We also hope that he and the INQUIRER readers have seen the PEF information ad that came out in this newspaper last Dec 19. This ad listed our current projects. We would like to publish a list of our projects at least once a year so the public or interest groups can provide us feedback, positive or negative, on these projects.

We have supported projects with the Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE NGO), which comprises 10 NGO networks and peoples' organizations in the country, with a combined membership of over 2,000. It is CODE-NGO's responsibility to implement these projects that will benefit the poor sectors and communities.

Our records are open for scrutiny. Anybody interested can visit our website at www.peacefdn.org and look at the lists of projects and audited financial statements.

—VERONICA F. VILLAVICENCIO,
executive director,
Peace and Equity Foundation,
69 Esteban Abada St.,
Loyola Heights, Quezon City

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Gov't retirees forced to spend cheerless Xmas

THIS REFERS TO THE VERY late delivery of GSIS pensioners' checks here in the Caraga region. More specifically, I am taking off from the case of my sister, Erlinda Mantilla, a retired school teacher who has been waiting for her December pension check and bonus. Most of the old, retired teachers like her are in a similar situation. They have been told that their checks are still being processed in Manila.

GSIS pensioners should be properly advised why they were not able to receive their bonus checks on time. The Government Service Insurance System has spent millions, billions perhaps, to upgrade its service, and yet, many pensioners still suffer not only from its inefficiency but also from the discourteous behavior of its staff.

As an agency that services mostly old, retired government employees, many of whom are already hard of hearing or slow to comprehend instructions, the GSIS should take the extra mile of extending special care and patience to service their customers, and not just turn them away with utmost disdain. After all, these teachers had paid their GSIS premiums year after year in times past.

Spending the holidays without the benefit of their Christmas bonus, these pensioners have become such a sorry, pitiful sight. We long for the day when the GSIS will give us, its members and beneficiaries what is due to us—kind, efficient, courteous service.

—CHONA M. MANTILLA,
734 C.P. Tan St.,
Buenavista, Agusan del Norte,
chona_mantilla@yahoo.com

Senate vote on US bases recalled

THANK YOU FOR HELPING OUR countrymen remember the Senate's historic vote rejecting the continued stay of the US military bases in the Philippines.

However, I wish to clarify two of the facts mentioned in the article by Tony S. Bergonia last Jan. 2.

First, it was not former Sen. Jose W. Diokno but former Sen. Lorenzo M. Tañada, who rose from his wheelchair to cheer when then Senate President Jovito Salonga announced the 12-11 vote rejecting the treaty.

Second, Nikki Coseteng was still a member of the House of Representatives, and not yet a senator, when she starred with Joseph Estrada in "Sa Kuko ng Agila."

I was at the Senate lobby, being a staff member of then Sen. Rene Saguisag, when the vote was taken. I was seated beside Teddyboy Locsin, still a newspaper publisher then and not yet a member of the House. And I heard him quip that most of the country's communists were in the Senate gallery at the time, if the military cared to know.

Incidentally, contrary to what those who favored the retention of the bases had warned, the Philippines did not meet its doom when the Americans pulled out their bases. The rejection of a new treaty even allowed Richard Gordon, who was pro-bases, to prove that the Filipinos can survive the absence of US military bases.

—ARCHIMEDES S. MARQUEZ,
420 Gov. A. Pascual St.,
San Jose, Navotas,
Metro Manila

Police brass applying superficial solution to a very serious problem

PLASTERING THE NOZZLES OF policemen's service firearms every Christmas or New Year's Eve reflects how ridiculous our police system is. Absolutely it is a superficial solution to a deep-rooted problem. Top police officials, even those in rural areas, may find it effective but it's funny. If we are to think of it, our police officials have completely failed to find an effective long-term solution to police abuse other than plasters. Is it a shame or not?

Our police don't have to "plaster" their service firearms if they have self-discipline even when they're drunk. Top police officials don't have to hold ridiculous annual photo ops showing "plastered" guns.

How many stories have we heard of policemen firing guns during Christmas or New Year's Eve with or without plasters on them? How many persons have been tortured by the police even though our 1987 Constitution strictly prohibits it?

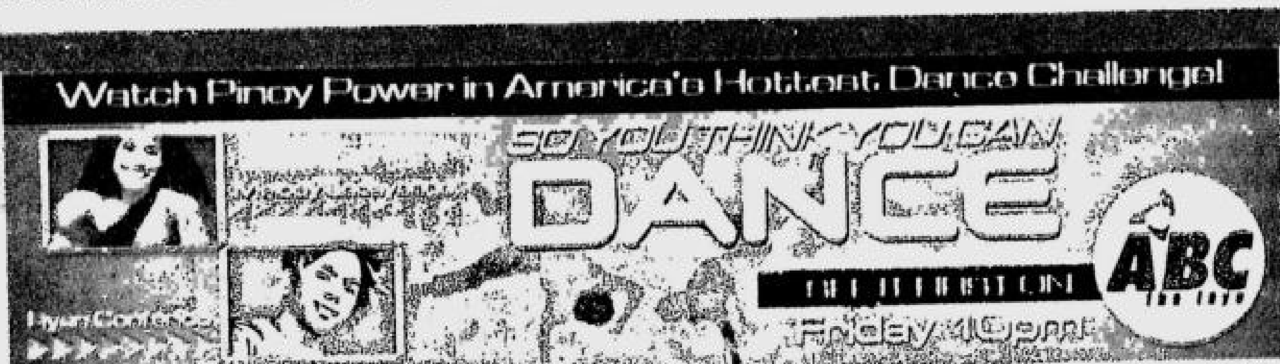
Short-term solutions have failed to address the roots of police abuse. Unless the government acknowledges this problem, instead of labeling its critics who speak of the truth as "terrorist or destabilizers," we won't have genuine reforms in our police system. There will only be more guns to put plaster on.

—DANILO REYES,
16 Ground Floor, Nam Kau,
Kak Tin Village, Tai Wai,
New Territories, Hong Kong, SAR

Erratum

In Antonio J. Montalvan II's column last Monday, one sentence was wrongly rephrased in the process of editing to make it appear as if the Special Care for Special Children had hired a caregiver and a nursing assistant. The project's lone employee performs both functions.

Also Lourd Ostique, curator of Museo de Oro, is a he, not a she.—Ed.



Watch Pinoy Power in America's Hottest Dance Challenge!
So You Think You Can Dance
ABC
Friday 10pm
ClickTheCity.com

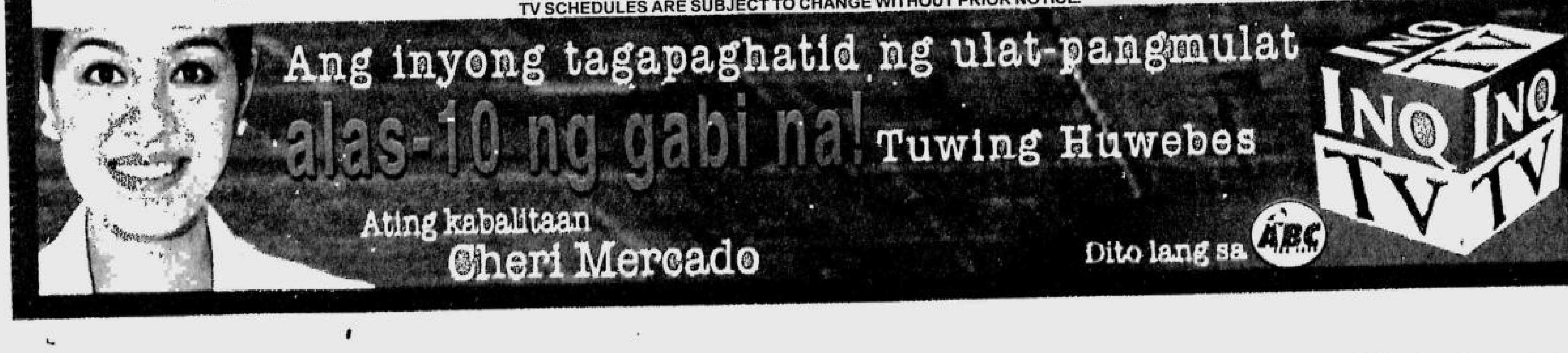
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

Thursday, January 5, 2006

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5			Winner TV Shopping		Barclay's EPL		Goals		Sentro	Mumbai Thrillers	S.O.S		Wala Yan Sa Lolo Ko		Big News	Rockstar (Result Show)	Inq TV		Billboard On-Air
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Amazing Twins	Meteor Garden Season 2	TV Patrol World	Pilipinas Game KNB?	Mga Anghel Na Walang Langit	Only You	Vietnam Rose	Pinoy Big Brother	Maalaala Mo Kaya			Insider
AXN		CSI: Miami (Season 3)		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 5)		Mondo Magic		PSI Factor (Season III)		24		Gamemax	Hollywood's Greatest Stunts	Fear Factor (Season IV)		The World's Wildest Commercials	The World's Wildest Commercials	The Contender Special	
Cartoon Network	Johnny Bravo	Dexter's Laboratory	Powerpuff Girls	Tom & Jerry Show	Acceleracers GP			The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy		Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers	Battle B-Daman	Machine Robo-Rescue	X-Men Evolution	Samurai Jack	Justice League	Static Shock	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers
Cinemax				The Notorious Landlady				Necessary Roughness				Precious Victims			Empire Of The Sun (9:45 PM)				
CNN				Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Sabrina, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Lizzie Mcguire		Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Ranger	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN						Pro Billiards '05 BCA Open 9-Ball C'ships Finals		Boxing Series Friday Night Fights				Sportscenter Asia	College Football Bowl Game '05 Rose Bowl						Sportscenter Asia
ETC		GBB	Knock First	1 Hr Edited Version Of Today Show		Elimidate	Change of Heart	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	Good Morning Miami	Committed	American Dreams		Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
EWTN	The Catholic Faith & Vatican II	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Virtue Storybook	Image Of God	Your Vocation: God's Call In Your Life	Rosary With Mother Angelica	Good Or Evil-Who Decides?	EWTN Gallery	Where God Weeps	EWTN Live (Encore) With Fr. Mitch Pacwa		Catechisms And Controversies	The Word Was Made Flesh	Daily Mass (SAP) Live		Angelus (10:15PM)	St. Thomas More Faithful Statesman	The Journey Home Encore	
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	Date With Tiffany		Dragonball Z	Slam Dunk	Frog Prince	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Sugo	Etheria	Starstruck 3	Jewel In The Palace		Magpakailanman			Saksi
Hallmark Channel	Bewitched IV	Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye II		HCA: The Fairytaler	Sesame Street		Who's The Boss	Bewitched IV	The Nanny III	Changi		Judging Amy		Jane Doe: Vanishing Act			Judging Amy (10:35PM)		Strong Medicine
HBO				Love Don't Cost A Thing			Paparazzi (5:45 PM)				Beavis And Butt-Head Do America			The Bourne Supremacy			Iron Jawed Angels		
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Home Shopping Network		ME TV					IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	Dr. Katz	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Beat The Geeks					Cinematech	Family Guy	Mad TV		Reno 911	Crank Yankers	South Park	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Hip-Hop Nation	Ride With Funk Master Flex	WWE Velocity	
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	The Fix	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Tyler's Ultimate	E! News Weekend		Good Finds	Life & Style		E! True Hollywood Story		Road & Track	Back To Basics
MTV Philippines	Making The Video	MTV Cribs	MTV Hits		Pimp My Ride	Pop Inc.		MTV Hits				MTV Hits	Get Spotted	TRL		Punk'D	Brand New	MTV Hits	VH1 Video Collections
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYX News		Star MYX	MYXilog	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		MYX Presents		MYX Bandarito	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX
National Geographic		Megastructures		Explorations Powered By Duracell	Seismic Seconds	D-Day		Top 5		Wow!		About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Megastructures		Explorations Powered By Duracell	Egypt Detectives
NBN		Value Vision		New Life TV Shopping		Teledyaryo	Diyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Sila?	Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo				Network Forum		Bantay OCW With Susan K	
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues/What Planet Are You From	Rugrats	Hey Arnold!	My Life As A Teenage Robot/Right On Top	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Fairly Odd Parents	All That	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	Drake & Josh	The Fairly Odd Parents	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Rocket Power	Chalkzone	The Wild Thornberrys	The Angry Beavers	The Brothers Garcia
PBO			Abandonada				Despedida				Eagle Squad				Mahal Kita Final Answer				Bitag Bala At Babae
Qtv		Bodyguard	Striker Hungry Heart	The Prince Of Tennis	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Star	Hotelier	All In	Laugh To Laugh: Ang Kulit	O, Mare Ko		News On Q	Women's Desk		Groupee TV	
RPN 9	TV Shopping		Defenders Of The Earth	Hey Arnold!	Wild Thornberrys	Sponge Bob	As Told By Ginger	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	WWE Smackdown		The Ultimate Fighter		Revelations		Newswatch Now	Video Hit Parade	Kasangga Mo Ang Langit	Police Hour
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Sony Bmg Video			
Solar Sports				NBA Game Jazz @ Pistons					JVC Interscholastic			Sportsdesk	NBA Jam	NBA Game Trailblazers @ Spurs					NBA Inside Stuff
Sports Plus	NBA Game Houston @ Washington					Party Poker.com World Open 2005				SMB Poker Bar Tour 2	BD South Beach	Superbowl Stories		World Game		NFL 2005 Tennessee @ Jacksonville			
Star Movies		Eulogy (3:15 PM)			Born On The Fourth Of July					Trapped In Paradise				Underworld				Good Morning Vietnam	
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Whose Line Is It Anyway?	Angel		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Friends	Scrubs	8 Simple Rules	Miss World/John Lennon: Working Class Hero		The Apprentice		Friends	Scrubs
Studio 23		Yugioh Duel Monster		UAAP				Batman Beyond	Pinoy Big Brother	Wazzup Wazzup	The Contender		Alias (8:20 PM)	Desperate Housewives		News Central	Oprah		Salt

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.



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Ating kabalitaan
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Dito lang sa ABC
INQ TV

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INQUIRER *Southern Luzon*

Editor **Jun Bandayrel**
Bureau Chief **Floreño G. Solmirano**

'Judges walk with one foot on the grave'

By Marlon Ramos
Bacoor, Cavite

IT MAY TAKE A WHILE BEFORE MARIBETH GINGOYON RE-sumes her early morning jogs on weekends. Maribeth, 51, has lost her favorite jogging partner—her husband, Pasay City Judge Henrick Gingoyon—who was felled by four assassins' bullets a few hours after taking their usual run on New Year's Eve.

PNP chief Director General Arturo Lomibao talks to the children of the late Judge Henrick Gingoyon during his wake in Bacoor, Cavite.
ERIK ARAZAS

Henrick, a fitness buff, had been her "physical fitness partner" for more than 30 years, she said.

For years, jogging around their neighborhood at Soldiers' Hills Village in Barangay Molino in Bacoor, Cavite, had been their routine on weekends and whenever her husband's busy schedule allowed them to, she said. "He liked to jog and go to the gym after work."

Maribeth had earlier shunned media interviews, refusing to talk about the circumstances of Henrick's fate. She agreed to talk to this writer for a few minutes during the wake of her husband in their house on Jan. 3, moments before police presented the judge's alleged murderer.

Gingoyon's remains will be flown to his hometown in Cebu City today and will be cremated on Sunday. He left a wife, four daughters—Hazel, 30; Hyacinth, 27; Henriette, 20; and Henrikka, 10—and a son, Henrick Martin Dion, 13.

Nothing unusual

Maribeth said she noticed nothing unusual the day her husband was attacked some 25 meters from their house.

"We ate breakfast, jogged around the subdivision and went home afterwards at about 6:30 a.m. He then took a nap. When he woke up at 10:30 a.m., he told me he would just go to the gym," she said.

The gym, where Gingoyon frequented for years, is just 50 meters away from their house. His children said their father usually went there at around 7 p.m. on weekdays.

Witnesses said a man had been snooping around the place moments before Henrick was shot and killed. Police said the gunman even checked the logbook of the establishment to make sure that his target was inside the gym.

Maribeth said she still could not face the reality that the man she had spent thousands of miles jogging around is now gone forever.

"He was kind, *wala siyang kapalit* (he is irreplaceable)," she said, holding back tears.

She said the presence of friends and relatives at the wake was what kept her from crying and thinking about the family's uncertain future.

Dangerous profession

In the entire 30 years of being in the legal profession as a lawyer, prosecutor and judge, Gingoyon never discussed the cases he was handling with his family. Nor did he tell them about threats on his life, Maribeth said.

But he told her that being a judge "is a dangerous profession."

"He used to tell me that judges walk with one foot on the grave. He said receiving threats was just normal for judges," she related.

Maribeth said her husband was never bothered after handing down the decision on the Philippine International Air Terminal Corp. (Piatco) case. He ruled that the national government must pay $63 million to Piatco for taking over the mothballed Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

The recent decision of the Supreme Court upholding his decision has "vindicated him," she said.

When asked if she knew that Gingoyon had accused the prime suspect, Senior Supt. Manuel Barcena, of being behind the shooting of their house almost three years ago, she said she knew that her husband had filed an affidavit with the National Bureau of Investigation.

But she declined to comment when asked if the incident had something to do with the killing of her husband.

Barcena has denied involvement in the murder.

Cool dad

Gingoyon's children said they would be surely missing "the perfect and coolest dad one could ever have."

"I may be biased, but he was really perfect a dad. He was not just a father, he was also a friend to us," Hazel said, sobbing.

Seeing her father inside the coffin is a surreal scene for them, she said. "We still could not accept [his tragic death]," she said.

Henriette said their father was very supportive of their decisions and ambitions.

She said their close ties did not dissuade Gingoyon from agreeing to her and her sister Hazel's plan to move to the United States after her graduation in February.

Another sister, Hyacinth, is now in the US working in a Los Angeles firm. Since Gingoyon's death, the family has had constant communication with Hyacinth through the Internet.

Despite being a disciplinarian, Gingoyon always reached out to all his children. Henriette said it was their father who taught them to value family ties.

Hazel said it was their closeness that kept her from leaving their house and settling down.

Frugality

Henriette said her father's frugality was the one thing that she admired most in him. Despite their relative affluence, their father taught them the value of saving money, she said.

"Actually, *pareho sila ni* (they are similar) Mommy. They showed us the importance of valuing hard-earned money," she said.

Henriette added that her father even preferred bringing home-cooked food to the office rather than spending money in some fancy restaurants.

Despite having been promoted as a regional trial court judge of one of the biggest cities in the country, Gingoyon had remained unassuming, she said.

Only a few in the neighborhood knew that he was already a judge, Henriette said. Most of them addressed him as "Attorney."

"But it was OK with him," she said.

One of the neighbors said she was a witness to Gingoyon's humility.

"He would usually greet us and the other neighbors. *Naglalakad lang siya dito tulad ng ibang simpleng tao. Kaya nagulat kami sa nangyari sa kanya* (He would just walk around here like other simple people. So we were shocked at what happened to him)," the neighbor said.

Henriette said her father also gave legal services and advice to the community free of charge.

He made them understand the importance of respecting other people, especially those who have less in life.

Kind boss

Jonathan Orlino, 33, was a witness to how the slain judge valued ordinary people.

Working as a utility man in Gingoyon's office for three years, Orlino said he felt like he lost a father and defender.

"Despite his stature, he never looked down at us. We were all equal for him. He was really kind. I cannot even remember him getting angry at any of his staff members," he said.

He described Gingoyon as "a hands-on boss." The judge always saw to it that he attended the monthly meeting with his staff, he said.

Orlino remembered how, in one of those meetings, Gingoyon reminded them that maintaining cleanliness in the office was not just a utility man's job but that of the entire staff, including the judge.

Orlino likewise described his boss as a fun-loving person who was always ready to lend a helping hand.

Hazel said they planned to bring back their father's cremated remains to their house in Bacoor.

"My father used to tell us how he loved this house and how he loved to stay here. So we will bring him back to the house which he referred to as a labor of love," she said.

Corruption drives construction exec back to writing

By Gil Francis G. Arevalo
Oas, Albay

EUROPE'S MOST FAMOUS COLLECTIO
DALÍ
PONTE DI RIALTO
RIALTO
DALÍ
PICASSO
EUROPE'S MOST

AWARD-WINNING author Abdon "Jun" Balde Jr. poses beside posters of world-renowned artists.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

FOR 33 YEARS, HE headed construction projects for Philrock Inc. of the Yuchengco Group of Companies. A civil engineer by profession, he had served as business development manager, construction manager, marketing manager, and eventually, vice president of the company.

Rampant corruption in private and public works, however, made Abdon "Jun" Balde Jr., 59, decide to quit his job and retire in September 1999 to devote his time to his first love—writing.

This social evil is very evident in his first novel, "Sa Kagubatan ng Isang Lungsod (In the Forest of A City)," the only nominated finalist in Filipino fiction in the September 2002 National Book Award.

Unraveling events that happened in over 20 years, the book dwells on an ancient tragedy in a modern setting of ill-fated lives, doomed love and corruption in the government.

"Many readers are wondering why I had to write about this kind of theme that has been happening since time immemorial, but based on experience, its complexities and perplexities give one a new perspective, especially of what's going on in our country today—from 'jueteng' payoffs to other scandals," Balde said.

Rampant corruption in the bureaucracy and the declining interest of the new generation in Filipino culture and literature today have again enlivened the writer in him.

Discovery

National artist Virgilio S. Almario hails Balde as a new discovery in Philippine literature. Multi-awarded poet Rebecca Añonuevo admires his unique works for their artful imagination and simplicity.

Other prominent writers in the country consider him a late bloomer.

Some of Balde's peers consider his decision to retire as an incomprehensible career shift. But his becoming a consistent nominee and awardee has made a difference, especially at a time when many Filipino readers and moviegoers are drawn more to Harry Potter, "Lord of the Rings," Ragnarok and Marvel Comics than their very own literary heroes.

Books

Balde's first short story, "Milagro Sa Aming Nayon," was published in Liwayway magazine in 1961. It was followed in 1968 by "Kuwento ng Isang Pag-ibig," which is now included in college textbooks.

His first book, published in September 2001, was "Mga Pangarap at Pangitain," a collection of 14 short stories written over four decades. It instantly received recognition from critics and fellow writers.

One of his friends, Joseph Briones, a writer based in Legazpi City, said Balde had been very supportive of the initiatives of few writers and scholars in the region to publish, preserve and further study the culture, arts and literature in the different historical sites in Albay.

Balde's fourth book, "Hunyango sa Bato," a novel which won the 2005 Juan C. Laya Award for Book of the Year, is also about corruption in the construction industry and irregularities in the execution of public works.

Though the recurring theme has been considered both popular and infamous nowadays, the book became a hit. Aside from praises and awards his book has received, Balde has made a breakthrough by providing a new dimension in his style and sincerity in his messages through his characters that anyone can easily identify with or relate to.

But "Sa Kagubatan ng Isang Lungsod" and "Hunyango sa Bato" are very much different from his 2003 National Book awardee "Ma'yong," a collection of Filipino short stories based on the legends and the surroundings of Mayon Volcano; "Supay," the 2003 Carlos Palanca awardee for short story; and the forthcoming "Sa Lupain ng Ibalong," the Bicol epic in novel form, in which he divulged the forgotten significance of the history, culture and literature of his own region.

As a writer, Balde said he wanted to put a modern touch to the folklore that the country had for the young generation to read and research. He expressed happiness that he was among those making efforts to remind the young to "please, please, pick it up and read it for your ancestors' sake!"

He stressed that the success of the "Lord of the Rings" by J.R.R. Tolkien and "Harry Potter" by JK Rowling is but one good example.

Native tongue

Balde recalled that he used English as a medium of his literary and other writings from 1970 to 1999.

But many of his friends have persuaded him to write in Filipino for the majority of the readers still love to read Filipino books, and using the medium is the only way that his future work will be understood.

Besides, according to him, many writers that have been awarded the Nobel Prize for literature writing and publishing are using their own languages but only translated in English.

"Foreigners are not familiar with our Filipino-American style of idioms and metaphors. That's why it's better to write in our own dialect and let American or British experts translate it in their own language," Balde said.

After publishing four books since 2001 and receiving numerous awards, he's now [illegible]ed to write in his native tongue, the Bicol-Oasnon.

Born in Barangay Busac, Oas, Albay, Balde now stays in Manila with his family but often comes home to visit historical places and meet old pals.

He started to write "*rawit-dawit*" (Bicol poems) and "*tigsik*" (satirical lines) only last year, but all of his pieces were published only in the region.

"I decided to write in Filipino for I do believe that the majority of readers still love the local setting and the mood that is totally of Filipino character. But I have come to a point where I'm looking for the mood and character that speak of my native town," Balde said.

The Bicol-Oasnon is one of the many Bicol languages that are seemingly difficult to use. For Balde, however, this is the only way to convey stories from his region.

Local writers, historians and young researchers have been inspired by his decision, as the common call now is to encourage local governments and state universities and colleges to preserve local culture as new avenues are provided to popularize it.

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Local execs back 'no-el' proposal

OZAMIZ CITY—LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFIcials expressed support for a proposal made by the Consultative Commission to postpone the holding of elections next year as the country shifts to a parliamentary form of government.

The Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (Ulap), a group of the country's mayors and governors, said in a statement that postponing next year's elections would have more benefits for the people.

The same sentiment prevails in this city.

Lawyer Afredo Buseco, an Iligan city legislator and vice president of the Philippine Councilors League (PCL), said the prospect of automatic term extension until 2010 is the principal come-on of the proposal for local elective officials.

Buseco said they are in favor of Charter change because of such a "bargain."

A Misamis Occidental councilor, who asked not to be named, said the proposal "hits at the very interest of local politicians—political survival."

"Admittedly, it is a daunting task to submit oneself for reelection. No matter how winnable one is, one has to spend money and worry about probability," the local legislator said.

Coop-Nattco party-list Rep. Guillermo Cua, who visited nearby Tangub City recently, said elected officials will have longer time to implement projects when the Constitution is amended, obviously referring to the automatic term extension if the "no-el" transitory provision is adopted.

Misamis Occidental Rep. Herminia Ramiro described the proposed scrapping of the 2007 elections as "a cost-saving measure" because the national government can forego spending as much as P8 billion if the elections are postponed until 2010.

Ramiro said such a "break" can also provide a "healing period" for Filipinos who have seen so much political wrangling lately.

Apart from Ramiro, Misamis Occidental politicians known to be Charter change advocates include Rep. Ernie Clarete, Gov. Loreto Ocampos, city mayors Jorge Almonte of Oroquieta, Reynaldo Parojinog of Ozamiz and Jennifer Tan of Tangub.

The proposed no-el transitory provision was recommended by the ConCom to entice officials to back the package of proposals it drew up to amend the 1987 Charter.

But In Davao City, ConCom member Rey Magno Teves said the proposal will face an uphill climb in terms of public approval.

"I am positive it (referring to no-el) will have difficulty in getting public approval," Teves said.

Ryan D. Rosauro and Judy Quiros, PDI Mindanao Bureau

LYN RILLON

VOLUNTEERISM
Volunteers carry sacks of sand to areas in Calapan City which suffered from heavy flooding due to record rainfall, among other factors.

40 nursing board examinees demand test results

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—FORTY EXAMInees from Iloilo who took the nursing board examinations in December are asking the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) to release the test results it had withheld due to alleged overloading of academic courses and other discrepancies in their records.

The examinees were among the 500 graduates of West Negros College (WNC) in Bacolod City who took the exams last Dec. 3 and 4. They are professionals who are taking nursing as their "second course."

The test results of 604 examinees, at least half of whom were said to be from WNC, were withheld by PRC. It was not known whether they have passed or failed the nursing board examination.

Lawyer Nelia Jesusa Lingaya-Gonzales, herself one of the examinees and also their spokesperson, said PRC has the obligation to release the nursing board results.

"Even those who failed are given notice with corresponding rating. We have the right to know whether we failed or passed," she said.

Lily Ann Baldago, regional director of PRC, said a random investigation of academic records of WNC nursing graduates showed that there has been "academic overloading," or some students had taken more academic courses than what were allowed.

Some students were said to have academic load of 40 to 46 units. "It is impossible that they can cope with that," said Baldago, herself a nurse and a former dean of the West Visayas State University College of Nursing.

There were also some problems in the sequencing of courses, she said. For example, a student was enrolled in anatomy and physiology, a pre-requisite course, in the last semester. Baldago also said that another student took three Related Learning Experience courses, which may require hospital work, all at the same time.

GMA saves Mt. Province hotel that her father built

By Desiree Caluza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

SAGADA, MT. PROVINCE—PRESident Macapagal-Arroyo has rescued the hotel that her father built.

Ms Arroyo, during her visit here on Monday, ordered the Philippine Tourism Authority to relinquish control over the 22-room Mt. Data Lodge in Bauko town.

The PTA closed the hotel on New Year's Eve for auctioning or lease, along with 11 other hotels and some 40 PTA assets that have not been earning for the past 10 years.

Ms Arroyo's father, the late President Diosdado Macapagal, built the Mt. Data Lodge in 1962, and a photograph showing a 15-year-old Ms Arroyo now hangs there.

The facility is also a historic site because former President Corazon Aquino and former rebel priest Conrado Balweg signed the 1987 "sipat" (cessation of hostilities) there that led to the formation of the Cordillera Administrative Region.

PTA general manager Robert Dean Barbers issued a termination letter to 11 of the hotel's employees on Dec. 9, 2005. It officially closed its doors on Dec. 31, according to Dolores Theodore, the lodge's manager.

Barbers is implementing a 2004 resolution of the PTA board that decided to sell off the agency's old assets to invest in new facilities, according to a PTA director.

Theodore said PTA classifies the Mt. Data Lodge as its fifth poorest earning facility with annual losses amounting to P2 million.

Ms Arroyo flew here on Tuesday to discuss Mt. Data Lodge's fate with Mt. Province Gov. Maximo Dalog.

Tanauan mayor cries Comelec conspiracy

By Jerome Aning

A GRAND CONSPIRACY WAS how the mayor of Tanauan City, Batangas described a ruling by the Commission on Elections that unseated him and declared his losing opponent as the real winner following recount proceedings that ended last month.

Mayor Alfredo Corona questioned Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr.'s designation of Commissioner Rufino Javier to the agency's second division, which nullified Corona's victory over his rival Sonia Aquino in the 2004 elections.

Corona, through his counsel Sixto Brillantes, filed motions demanding that Javier withdraw his vote and that the division halt the execution of its Dec. 22 decision unseating Corona.

The mayor called Javier's vote "absolutely illegal, grotesquely indecent and totally un-Christian," as he pointed out that it was impossible for Javier to completely understand the circumstances and ramifications of the case because Javier was designated to the three-member division only two days before the decision came out.

Brillantes added that the very large and substantial numbers of contested and questioned ballots needed to be examined, scrutinized, reviewed, analyzed and appreciated by Javier if a just, fair, equitable and reasonable conclusion and position can be arrived at.

"Javier is surely not Superman, much less a Supreme Being, and is undeniably not a genius to be able to suddenly come out with his Sadain-agreeing position in so short a time," Brillantes said.

It would be recalled that the division's third seat has been vacant for some time. Commissioners Resurreccion Borra and Romulo Brawner, whom Abalos consecutively designated to fill up the the vacancy, earlier inhibited themselves from the case.

In its ruling on the election protest, the Comelec said it found that Aquino won by 3,102 votes over Corona. The local election board had Corona winning by 3,741 over Aquino.

Javier voted in favor of the decision which was penned by Commissioner Mehol Sadain and 465-pages long, one of the longest in the agency's history, according to Brillantes.

In contrast, the dissent of the other member of the division, Commissioner Florentino Tuason Jr., was 115 pages long.

Aquino questioned the election results from 342 precincts of the 26 barangays in Tanauan. While Sadain ruled that there were no spurious ballots, Tuason said there were indeed numerous spurious ones because of the absence of Comelec security features.

However, Corona said the decision should remain a tie and elevated to the Comelec en banc, according to the rules.

ROUNDUP

2 boys killed in explosion

TWO BROTHERS aged 14 and 15 were killed and their mother and two younger sisters were seriously injured when a grenade that the boys dug up while tilling their farm exploded at around 12:45 p.m. yesterday in Sitio Sampinit 2, Barangay Libertad, Escalante City, Negros Occidental. Killed in the explosion were Allan Catipay, 15, and his brother Alano, 14, said Insp. Mateo Maguate, Escalante police chief.

2 survive sea mishap

CEBU CITY—A fisherman and his 14-year-old daughter survived after a passenger vessel hit their motorized boat while they were fishing off Mactan Channel in Cebu on Dec. 29. Juanito Lipaopao, 50, and daughter Charlotte, both from Sitio Paradise, Looc, Mandaue City, were able to swim back to the shore of Barangay Looc after MV Ormoc Star owned by Roble Shipping, which had just left the Cebu port for Hilongos, Southern Leyte, rammed and destroyed their boat at around 10:30 p.m. Chief Petty Officer Lemuel Alquiza, Cebu Coast Guard deputy station commander, said Lipaopao could be faulted for the incident because his banca had no lights.

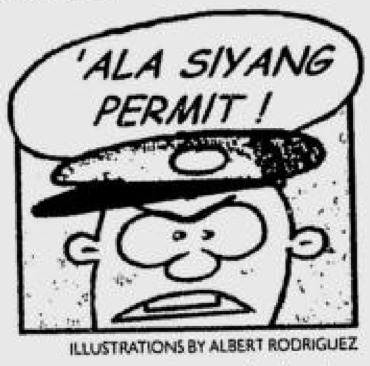
Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau

P1.8M robbery

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Ten suspected members of a highway robbery syndicate held up the accountant of a spa in Batangas and took the salary of its employees worth P1.8 million in Lipa City on Thursday. Calabarzon police director Chief Supt. Jesus Verzosa said Arvin Manzano, accountant of The Farm at San Benito, a well-known spa and wellness center in Lipa City, and his staffer Lourdes Magnaye, were on board a Toyota Ace van to deliver the salaries of their employees when the suspects, riding in five motorcycles, blocked their path along a road in Barangay Tipakan at around noon. At least four of the suspects forced open the doors of the victim's car. Verzosa said the suspects ordered Manzano at gunpoint to hand them the bag containing the money. The suspects also ransacked the personal belongings of the victims then sped off toward San Jose, Batangas.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Chinese held for firecrackers


'ALA SIYANG PERMIT !

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

LUCENA CITY—Police arrested a Chinese national while selling firecrackers without permits. Lucena police chief Senior Supt. Reuben Theodore Sindac said concerned citizens tipped them off on Rolly Tan, 31, owner of Jackson Store located in Barangay 6, this city, for illegal distribution of firecrackers. In the raid on Wednesday, police confiscated several boxes of assorted firecrackers worth several thousands of pesos. Further investigation also showed that the suspect was not able to produce permits for his firecracker business. In December 2004, firecrackers started a huge fire in this city that killed more than 20 people and destroyed millions of pesos in property. Last year, the city government designated an unused public cemetery in the outskirts of the city as firecracker buying area.

Delfin T. Mallari, Jr. PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Food for work

CITY OF CALAPAN—Civil society groups of Calapan City, through the Oriental Mindoro PO-NGO Network (OrNet), are raising P100,000 for a food-for-work program supporting sandbagging activities in the Bucayao River here. From Dec. 28-31, staff members of the National Commission on Indigenous People, Mangyan Mission and Kapulungan Para sa Lupaing Ninuno provided medical and food packages to 25 Bangon and Buhid Mangyans. The Cibac party-list group, Holy Spirit Sisters and Assisi Foundation donated rice, medicines and assorted goods.

Madonna T. Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Meningo case in Laguna

CALAMBA CITY—A 2-year-old girl from Victoria, Laguna is suspected to have died of meningococcemia at the Laguna Provincial Hospital on Dec. 30, a hospital official said on Monday. Dr. Corazon Mendoza, officer in charge of the hospital, said the victim was rushed to the hospital on Friday by his parents. She said the girl had high fever and rashes all over her body, a common symptom of the deadly disease. After a few hours, the girl died of septicemia or infection of the blood. A source told the INQUIRER the girl and his parents went to Victoria town just to join their relatives in celebrating the New Year. The source said the victim traveled from Bacoor, Cavite where her father works. "While they were traveling, the girl complained of stomach and head aches. She also had fever. Her father just let her drink soft drinks, *tapos naging* ok *na 'yung bata*," the source told the INQUIRER.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Medical, dental services

PARANG KAMI ANG MAY BERTDEY !

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Doing away with the usual bash he did in his last two birthdays, Palawan 2nd District Rep. Abraham Kahlil B. Mitra instead held a medical-dental mission, inaugurated projects here and distributed relief goods to flood victims in Aborlan town as he celebrated his 36th birthday. A total of 1,211 residents received free medical and dental services (947 for medical and 264 for dental) in the day-long services rendered by a group of doctors from New Jersey led by Dr. Lorna Bayer. The activity was held in the newly renovated Mendoza Park, which Mitra also inaugurated with Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn. After the inauguration, the congressman went to Barangay Bahile to inaugurate a covered court project and have lunch with residents of the barangay. Later in the afternoon, he went to Aborlan town, 70 km south of Puerto Princesa City, to distribute relief goods to residents of five barangays who were victims of floods brought by relentless rains in December.

Geraldford P. Ticke, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

METRO

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EZ2
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SUERTRES
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(In exact order)

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Son not safe with Plinky, says ex-bf

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

RECTO

THE FORMER LOVER OF FITNESS expert Plinky Recto yesterday said that he took their one-year-old son to protect the boy from his own mother.

"This is not a legal case, but a medical case, particularly in the field of psychiatry," he told the INQUIRER in a phone interview yesterday. "She needs psychiatric help," he added, refusing to answer other questions.

He also asked that he not be identified, in line with Republic Act 9262, or the Anti-Violence against Women and their Children Act of 2004, ensuring the confidentiality of court records involving cases of violence against women and children.

Under section 44 of RA 9262, "whoever publishes or causes to be be published, in any format, the name, address, telephone number, school, business address, employer, or other identifying information of a victim or an immediate family member, without the latter's consent, shall be liable to the contempt power of the court."

Recto accused her former lover of kidnapping their son from her house in Mandaluyong City on Tuesday morning.

She vowed to exhaust all legal means to get her son back.

Recto had earlier accused her former lover, a wealthy and influential lawyer in Negros Occidental, of domestic abuse in the Mandaluyong City Regional Trial Court.

But unknown to Recto, he had filed a case against her before the Bago City Regional Trial Court, which granted him temporary custody of their son. The court also issued a 30-day protection order barring Recto from going near him.

Sources from his camp said the father and the boy were still in Metro Manila as of yesterday afternoon.

The father arrived at the Wack Wack Heights Condominium in Barangay Addition Hills in Mandaluyong City at about 10:30 a.m. Tuesday. He was with a court sheriff and at least eight operatives from the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group-National Capital Region.

He was allowed to enter the exclusive compound after showing the security guards the court order from the Bago City RTC.

The sources said he filed the case against Recto in behalf of their son in Bago City because "the (boy) is a resident of Negros Occidental, where he owns a house."

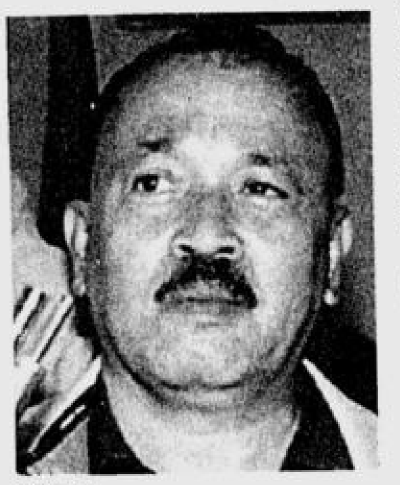
The father had apparently registered one of his houses under his son's name.

In his petition before the Bago City RTC, the father alleged that Recto was an unfit mother who would always leave their son to the care of the maids. Recto's friends have denied the allegations.

BACK TO SCHOOL
Children raise their hands during the first day of classes after the long Christmas break at Lagro Elementary School in Quezon City.
RAFFY LERMA

Jaylo faces illegal detention raps

By Leila B. Salaverria



JAYLO

A MANILA REGIONAL TRIAL court has ordered the arrest of Reynaldo Jaylo in connection with his apprehension of suspected illegal recruiters despite the disbanding of the Presidential Anti-Illegal Recruitment Task (Pairtf) that he used to head.

The warrant was issued on Dec. 29, 2005 by Judge Nina Antonio Valenzuela for six counts of serious illegal detention.

Because he was charged with several counts for a capital offense, there would be no bail recommended for the embattled former policeman, according to Valenzuela.

Copies of the warrant had been forwarded to the Department of Justice, the police and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI).

"We urge Jaylo, a former officer, to respect the rule of law and to surrender and not to bring this matter to the media. He should face the charges against him," said Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco.

According to Velasco, the arrests made by the Pairtf after its abolition were meant to extort money. He added that if the arrested people paid up, the charges against them were not filed. Velasco added that he had called on administrator Rosalinda Baldoz of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) not to allow Jaylo to be involved in the agency's operations.

Although the Pairtf was disbanded in July last year, its agents allegedly continued to conduct operations.

As a result, the NBI filed complaints of serious illegal detention and usurpation of authority against Jaylo and his men.

Jaylo, however, claimed he still had to arrest illegal recruiters because it was part of his job at the POEA and the labor department's Anti-Illegal Recruitment Task Force. The former Pairtf head is also a director of the POEA. Jaylo added that an illegal recruiter had filed the complaints against him and the Pairtf operatives.

The NBI earlier filed arbitrary detention and usurpation of authority charges against Jaylo before the justice department.

The bureau also filed charges of qualified bribery and illegal possession of firearms against Jaylo's men who were arrested in entrapment operations conducted by agents of the NBI's Special Task Force and Intelligence Special Operations Division in October last year.

The following month, agents of the NBI Special Action Unit raided the Pairtf's Manila office, leading to the arrest of more "illegal" operatives.

NBI officials explained that Jaylo did not have any authority to appoint intelligence officers, which they stressed were "nonexistent positions." Complainants had been trooping to the NBI office in the past two months, accusing Jaylo's operatives of robbery, extortion and serious illegal detention charges.

'Jail slay not linked to Ninoy case'

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE DEATH OF A FORMER SOLdier who had been convicted for killing opposition politician Benigno Aquino Jr. and his alleged assassin Rolando Galman has nothing to do with the unresolved double murder case.

Fr. Robert Olaguer, New Bilibid Prisons (NBP) chaplain, told the INQUIRER that Manuel Ocenar, the man who stabbed dead former Airman First Class Cordova Estelo, told him that the incident was not connected to the Aquino-Galman double murder case.

"He said he was not the type to let others use or dictate to him," Olaguer said, quoting Ocenar, the head of the Batang City Jail gang in the prison.

Estelo was stabbed dead by Ocenar, a fellow inmate at the NBP maximum security compound, on New Year's Eve. He was one of the 16 soldiers who had been convicted for the 1983 murders of Aquino and Galman.

Public Attorney Office chief Percida Acosta had said earlier that Estelo's death could be part of a plan to "liquidate" all the Aquino-Galman convicts.

Ocenar has been confined at the Philippine Orthopedic Center for a gunshot wound in his left knee. He was shot by a jail guard right after he stabbed Estelo.

"He also wanted to convey his apologies to the prison population for the inconvenience he had caused. He also expressed his sympathy for Estelo's family," said Olaguer, who visited Ocenar at the hospital before noon yesterday to offer spiritual comfort.

Ocenar, however, refused to give details about the stabbing incident.

"But he said he was ready to face the court with his statement," the priest added.

Olaguer said that after Estelo's death, the 14 other soldiers who had been convicted along with him told him that they now fear for their lives. Another convict, Brig. Gen. Luther Custodio, died of cancer in 1991.

"The group had been together ever since they were detained at Villamor Air Base. They have gone through a lot," Olaguer said.

Estelo's body, dressed in an airman's uniform, was transferred to the Villamor Air Base last night to allow his former colleagues to pay their final respects.

He will be brought back to Dasmariñas, Cavite early Saturday morning in time for the interment scheduled on the same day, said Olaguer.

METROBRIEFS

Tax discount

WALA BANG 50% DISCOUNT?

PAY your taxes early and get a discount. This was the advice of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza to owners of real property and business establishments in the city as he reminded taxpayers that late payment of dues could mean severe penalties. Atienza said the deadline for payment of real estate taxes without a penalty for the first quarter of 2006 would be on March 31. For the next three quarters of the year, the deadline for payment would be on June 30 for the second quarter, Sept. 30 for the third quarter, and Dec. 31 for the last quarter. Atienza announced that those who pay their taxes in full for the whole year before Jan. 31 would be entitled to a 20-percent discount, while those who pay on the first month of each quarter would be given a 15-percent discount. *Margaux C. Ortiz*

Post-holiday depression

DEPRESSION over the death of a friend may have led a 29-year-old newspaper vendor to kill himself in Quezon City, according to the police. Marlon Baranda's body was discovered hanging by a nylon cord from a wooden beam on the second floor of their house at 85 Sitio Lambak, Krus na Ligas, the police said. His father found the body at 2 p.m. Tuesday, said PO2 Jaime Jimena of the criminal investigation division of the Quezon City Police District. His family told the police that he might have been depressed over the death of a friend on New Year's Day. *DJ Yap*

Clean-up drive

MANILA Mayor Lito Atienza has given city officials and the traffic police until the end of the week to clear the Muslim Center in Quiapo of pedestrian and vehicular obstructions. "The Muslim area is one of the most problematic sites in the city," Atienza said, adding that the area's "chaotic character" has discouraged development and fostered illegal activities. He ordered the City Engineering Office to clear the streets of Elizondo, Globo de Oro, Gunao, Arlegui and Palanca of illegal vendors and physical obstructions. *Margaux C. Ortiz*

Special dance show

A SPECTACULAR dance show from Hawaii will be one of the highlights in today's 100th anniversary celebration of the First Filipino immigration to the islands. Manila Mayor Lito Atienza yesterday announced that the leading Polynesian group in Hawaii will perform in the "Tahiti Polynesian Show" at 8 p.m. today at the Baywalk. "This is in line with the centennial celebration of Filipino migration to Hawaii," he told reporters in an interview, adding that the show would be free of admission. The mayor said hula and Tahitian dances, fire eaters, and instrumentalists would perform during the show. *Margaux C. Ortiz*

Silent victim

POLICEMEN investigating the slay attempt on big time fish trader Alice Ordinario in Malabon City have complained that the victim has refused to cooperate in the probe. "The victim herself refused to submit an affidavit and did not want to talk to the investigators," a policeman said. Eight armed men fired on Ordinario's car last Thursday, killing four of her bodyguards. Ordinario was wounded in the attack along with a relative. *Nancy C. Carvajal*

'Night cops' to secure Metro sundowners

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE METRO MANILA POLICE has designated "night officers" to deter criminals that strike after the sun goes down.

"This is an anti-criminality strategy. Metro Manila is a city that no longer sleeps, and we need to do this," Director Vidal Querol, National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) chief, told the INQUIRER over the phone.

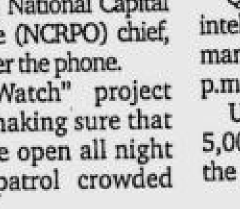
The "Night Watch" project mainly involves making sure that police stations are open all night and that cops patrol crowded places as well as darkly lit alleys.

Quoting police statistics, Querol's intelligence officer explained that many crimes happen between 8 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Under the project, 4,000 to 5,000 policemen will go around the metropolis at night. Areas that will be closely watched include Malate, Manila; Ayala-Alabang, Muntinlupa City; the Bonifacio Monument Circle in Caloocan; the Malabon, Caloocan and Navotas Junction; Cubao, Commonwealth; and Timog and Quezon Avenues in Quezon City. *With Jocelyn R. Uy*

PMAyers could be in serious trouble

ON TARGET



Ramon Tulfo

AN INSIDE SOURCE SAID COL. Efren Daquil, the whistle-blower in the alleged P30-million scam at the Philippine Air Force, is indulging in sour grapes.

The money is intact, therefore, the alleged scam that Daquil was talking about is nonexistent, according to my source.

Let's tackle Daquil's allegation that P30 million in savings had been disbursed illegally.

"It is true that the P30-million personnel savings cannot be realigned for other purposes without the approval of the Department of Budget Management. But it was never spent. It is now with the DBM procurement service to be used for the acquisition of uniforms of soldiers," said the source who refused to be named.

The reason Daquil was griping, said the source, was that he was not given the position of chief of the Special Operations Wing based in the former Clark Air Base in Pampanga. That would have given him the rank of a brigadier general.

Why was Col. Daquil, a graduate of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA), not given the "star" rank assignment? Because, my source said, he was allegedly linked to a woman soldier at Clark. "He was always absent from his post as deputy commander of the 710th Special Operations Wing, which is causing strained relations with his wife who is living in their quarters at Villamor Air Base in Pasay City," said the source.

* * *

Another PMAyer may be in serious trouble because his men have been linked to the murder of a manager of a Japanese restaurant. The PMAyer is a top-ranking officer at the Quezon City Police District (QCPD). His men were assigned to act as bodyguards of an alleged former "Japayuki," wife of a Japanese national. The QCPD officer and the woman reportedly had an affair. The woman and her husband allegedly conspired in the murder of a businessman who was gunned down on Mindanao Avenue, Quezon City. The two cops allegedly became the couple's hit men. It would be interesting to know why the two were involved in the murder conspiracy.

SC decision ready to back up MMDA enforcers

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE METROPOLITAN MANILA Development Authority (MMDA) will start "arming" its traffic enforcers, amid conflicting interpretations of a recent Supreme Court decision that stripped the agency of its police powers.

Corazon Gonzales, MMDA Public Affairs Service director, said they will be giving their enforcers copies of a letter written by Supreme Court (SC) chief information officer Ismael Khan Jr. explaining the High Tribunal's decision as guides "in case a motorist questions their authority."

The MMDA had initially wanted to distribute copies of the original SC ruling, but dropped the idea as their enforcers may not be able to understand the decision. In addition, the copies may be too bulky to carry in their pockets.

The High Tribunal's second division decision dated Dec. 5, 2005 dismissed the MMDA's petition for the court to reconsider its earlier ruling stopping the agency from issuing traffic violation receipts and confiscating drivers' licenses.

Khan explained that the decision did not strip the MMDA of the power to catch or arrest violators.

"While the MMDA can enforce traffic laws, ordinances, and regulations (arising from a legitimate source), it is devoid of the power to promulgate the same since it does not have police powers," he said.

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during peak hours (outside 11pm - 6am)
expires in 2 days

TO REGISTER
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and send to 258.

You will receive a confirmation
message of your registration.
You may now make unlimited
texts to other Smart subscribers for 2 days.
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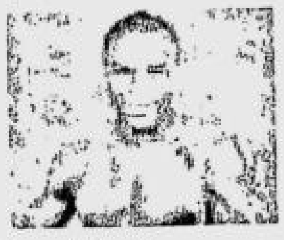
WHAT'S INSIDE

- Pacquiao, three other RP pugs meet in LA /A19
- Pistons thwart Magic /A20
- Hingis continues comeback surge /A20
- Mayweather Boxer of the Year /A20



Abap rehires crack Cuban coach

By Dennis U. Eroa
Libre sports editor

INSPIRED BY PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO'S DECLaration of boxing as a "preferred sport" in the search for the country's first Olympic gold, the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines has tapped Cuban coach Raul Fernandez Liranza to spearhead the training of the national training pool in Baguio City.

Liranza, who will arrive this month, reassumes the head coaching job he gave up following his controversial handling of the RP team in the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

Liranza is a leading member of the coaching staff of the famed Cuban boxing team which netted four golds, two silvers and a bronze medal in the 2004 Athens Olympics.

Presently, the Cuban boxing staff is headed by Sarvelio Fuentes with Liranza, Julian Gonzales and Julio Torres as deputies.

"There's no doubt in my mind that Raul will play a crucial role in our bid to ride the momentum on our Southeast Asian Games success to the 2006 Doha Asiad. said Manny Lopez, president of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines. "Simply put, Liranza is world class."

Lopez said PSC chair William Ramirez, chief accountant Merle Ibay, the ABAP and Cuban Ambassador to the Philippines Jorge Rey Jimenez have already ironed out details of Liranza's contract.

Liranza, who will be based in Baguio City, will receive a monthly salary of $3,000 (P159,000 at P53 to a dollar) with $2,500 coming from the PSC and $500 from the ABAP.

"Ambassador Jimenez has already assured me that the Cuban Sports Ministry has allowed Raul to come back. He's arriving this month," said Lopez.

Credited for helping Mansueto "Onyok" Velasco win the silver medal in the light flyweight class during the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, Liranza found himself in the middle of a controversy four years later at the Sydney Olympics that forced him to resign when he ordered brother Danny and Arlan Lerio to slug it out with their respective foes in the final round despite leading on points.

"Raul thought that the Lerios would be unbeatable. But we've already buried the past and we're looking forward to a more fruitful result for the national boxing team under Raul," Lopez said.

Liranza will be assisted by longtime national coaches Pat Gaspi and Boy Velasco and other members of the coaching staff credited for ousting powerhouse Thailand in the overall battle in the recent SEA Games boxing championships in Bacolod City.

Lopez said the Philippines is looking to win at least one gold in the Asian Games which the country is using to jumpstart its bid for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

"The more the merrier, of course," Lopez said.

Among the notables in the RP pool are Asian champions Harry Tañamor (light flyweight) and Joan Tipon (bantamweight) and promising lightweight Genebert Basadre, who also won a gold in the SEAG.

LIRANZA: Back to steer quest for gold.

PSC scraps contracts of six coaches

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE CONTRACTS OF SIX FOREIGN COACHes have been terminated by the Philippine Sports Commission in line with its drive to develop homegrown coaching talent base as incorporated in the Sports Institute set to be unveiled next month.

The number of foreign coaches will be reduced from 16 to 10 since the contracts of the six that will expire on Jan. 31 will not be renewed, according to PSC chair Butch Ramirez yesterday.

He said the Sports Institute will offer various courses aimed at developing the knowledge of coaches and athletes, adding that he retained the 10 foreign coaches to help facilitate the transfer of technology.

American bowling coach Purvis Granger and Chinese diving mentor Zhang Dehu were among those given fresh extension of their contracts as reward for their contribution to the 23rd Southeast Asian Games success.

Bowling won four golds while diving contributed five victories in the country's overall championship drive during the biennial Games last month.

Six other coaches still have live contracts until June 2006, while two more foreign coaches are under evaluation.

Ramirez said that one of the main factors in hiring foreign coaches is his ability to teach and transfer technology to local coaches.

"There should be somebody who will stay to teach our local coaches and transfer what they know," said Ramirez.

Team Philippines won 113 gold, 82 silver and 94 bronze medals to bag its first ever SEAG championship title since joining the biennial meet in 1977.

Meanwhile, the PSC will hold the Philippine Unified Sports Conference on Feb. 15 at the Philsports Arena with participants from the Department of Education, Department of Interior and Local Government, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the University Athletic Association of the Philippines (UAAP).

The meeting hopes to lay down the framework of the unified sports program for the year especially in holding national-level meets like the Palarong Pambansa, the Tertiary Palaro, the Prisaa and the Philippine National Games.

AIR21's John Ferriols tries to score off TNT's Mark Telan in their game last night. RUDY ESPERAS

Cantrell bucks cramps, powers TNT to q'finals

By June Navarro

GAME TOMORROW *(Cuneta Astrodome)*
7 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs San Miguel Beer

CRAMPS COULD NOT SLOW down Damien Cantrell.

Cantrell shrugged off the piercing pain in both legs and boosted Talk 'N Text to a quarterfinal slot with a 101-91 win over Air21 last night in the San Mig Coffee-PBA Fiesta Conference at the Cuneta Astrodome.

"He (Cantrell) knows that every game his job is on the line," said Talk 'N Text coach Joel Banal, whose Phone Pals secured the fourth seeding and the automatic quarterfinal berth that goes with it.

"But he's a fighter and he's willing to slug it out just to keep his job," added Banal.

Talks of Cantrell's possible departure swirled when a team source revealed that a member of the coaching staff is set to fly to the United States and scout for another import.

But he's not ready to pack his things up.

Cantrell came out scorching with 12 points and 10 rebounds right in the first half and finished the game with 22 points and 22 boards, his 17th double-double in as many games.

"You cannot readily change an import who is willing to give 100 percent on the floor," said Banal.

Cantrell suffered cramps at the start of the fourth but insisted on being fielded again even though the Phone Pals were way ahead.

The only player who finished with double-double figures in all of his games, Cantrell also registered a 20-20 output for the third time in the conference.

Mark Telan added 18 points; Asi Taulava had 15 points and 13 rebounds while Jimmy Alapag tallied 15 points and 12 assists.

The Phone Pals, who will face either the Express, San Miguel or Coca-Cola after the wildcard phase, spoiled what could have been a glorious evening for Renren Ritualo.

The young Ritualo surpassed his father's (Florendo Sr.) career scoring total after drilling in 20 points for the Express. Ritualo, who became the first of only nine second-generation PBA players to outscore his father, increased his career total to 2011 points.

Florendo Sr. had 1,997 career points after nine seasons playing for Great Taste in the 80s while the younger Ritualo achieved the feat on his fourth year in the pro league.

The scores:

TALK 'N TEXT 101—Cantrell 22, Telan 18, Miller 15, Taulava 15, Alapag 15, Belano 9, Pablo 5, Carey 2, Gelig 0, Avenido 0.

AIR21 91—Daniels 22, Ritualo 20, De Ocampo 17, David 10, Arboleda 10, Ferriols 4, Canaleta 2, Tubid 2, Se 2, De Ocampo 2, Dacia 0, Fran 0.

Quarters: 29-21, 46-46, 74-65, 101-91.

Bigger PBL crowds seen

EXPECT BIGGER CROWDS WHEN THE 2006 PBL Heroes Cup resumes this Saturday after a long holiday break.

This is because some of the teams will be fighting for survival in the league's new playing venue—the elegant San Andres Gym.

Aside from its accessibility, staging games in the heart of the country's premier sporting city is part of the league's all-out effort to reach out to its thousands of fans.

Manila Sports Council chair Ali Atienza has warmly welcomed the addition of San Andres Gym to the league's playing venues, saying: "We're honored to be part of the PBL community and we assure all officials, owners and players of our all-out support."

"Sports-loving Manileños are now excited to see the games and we hope that our budding players will be inspired further by watching PBL games," said the son of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

"We're glad that Mr. Atienza and the city government allowed us to use the San Andres Gym. We hope we could bring good cheer to all Manileños," said PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad.

Trinidad said the inclusion of the San Andres Gym is one big step towards its goal of reviving the old PBL magic when games at the nearby Rizal Memorial Coliseum were filled to the rafters.

Estadian, Domogan rule CJH Chairman's Cup

GENE ESTADIAN TALLIED A WHOPping net 11-under-par 58 while Rep. Mauricio Domogan submitted an even-par 69 to clinch the low net and low gross awards in the recent Chairman's Cup year-end golf tournament at the Camp John Hay Golf Club in Baguio City.

Domogan, a 6-handicapper, also captured the Class A plum with his 63, winning over Fred Puckett and Ding Sevilla in the two-day tourney which attracted a record field of 230 players.

The other division winners were Rolly Esteban in Class B, Elmo Nevada in Class C, Sacha Vukasinovic in Class D, Nora Sy in the ladies division and Junjun Plana in the sponsors/guests.

Sponsors of the tourney held in honor of Camp John Hay chairman Bob Sobrepena were Communications, Camp John Hay Dev't, Co., Club Leisure Corp., Golforce, Le Chef, FMMI, John Hay Waters, Wilson, DHN Construction and Dev't Corp.

After presenting the trophies and prizes to the winners, Sobrepeña, chairman of the Camp John Hay Golf Club, announced the soft opening of the 19th Tee at the Manor Suites where the awards ceremony was held.

The revived 19th Tee is almost in the same location at the old John Hay, offering a panoramic view of the course. The 280-room Suites, meanwhile, is expected to be fully completed by summer this year and will supplement the existing facilities of the Camp John Hay Manor which was fully-booked during the holidays.

Jun Jun Plana, general manager of Wilson Sports, fired a two-under-gross of 67 in topping the sponsors/guests division.

The results:

Overall Net—Gene Estadian 58, Low Gross-Mauricio Domogan 69

Class A: 63 Mauricio Domogan, 64 Fred Puckett, 64 Ding Sevilla

Class B: 63 Rolly Esteban, 64 Gus Salgado, 65 Jun Cabiles

Class C: 62 Elmo Nevada, 63 Bobby Legaspi, 65 Tony Espiritu

Class D: 61 Sacha Vukasinovic, 62 Mark Mendoza, 63 James Molina

Ladies: 59 Nora Sy, 62 Lillbeth Ratcliffe, 66 Gloridy Sharpe

Guests/Sponsors: 67 Junjun Plana, 68 Jingy Tuason, 71 Jong Arcano

ROSARIO displays his SEAG gold medals.

SEAG champion targets Asian Games gold

AFTER WINNING TWO GOLD MEdals in the recent Southeast Asian Games here, skeet shooter Paul Brian Rosario is looking forward to a stint in the Asian Games in Doha, Qatar, late this year.

"That's my next goal," said the 23-year-old, 6-foot-2 Rosario during a break in training at the world-class PNSA range in Muntinlupa City. "I have yet to compete in the Asian Games. I hope to make it this time."

Rosario tallied a total of 138 points to beat a couple of Malaysians for the individual gold and then shared the team gold with Darius Hizon and Patricio Bernardo in the last SEAG.

His double triumph came two months after he snatched the individual skeet gold in the Seasa (Southeast Asian Shooting Association) championships in Kuala Lumpur where he outsteadied a Thai in the shootoff.

Rosario's entry into the shooting world at the tender age of 13 was largely influenced by his father, Pol, himself a former national skeet shooter.

"I am working much harder now because I would like to improve my SEAG performance," said Rosario, a marketing graduate of Thames International School. "With more international exposure, I know I'd be able to achieve my goal."

Rosario won his first gold medal at 17 in the 1999 pre-SEA Games invitational tournament organized by Prince Sufri in Brunei. He was part of the RP team that bagged a silver in Brunei during the 1999 SEAG. Then he captured two SEAG individual silvers—one in KL in 2001 and the other in Hanoi, Vienam, in 2003.

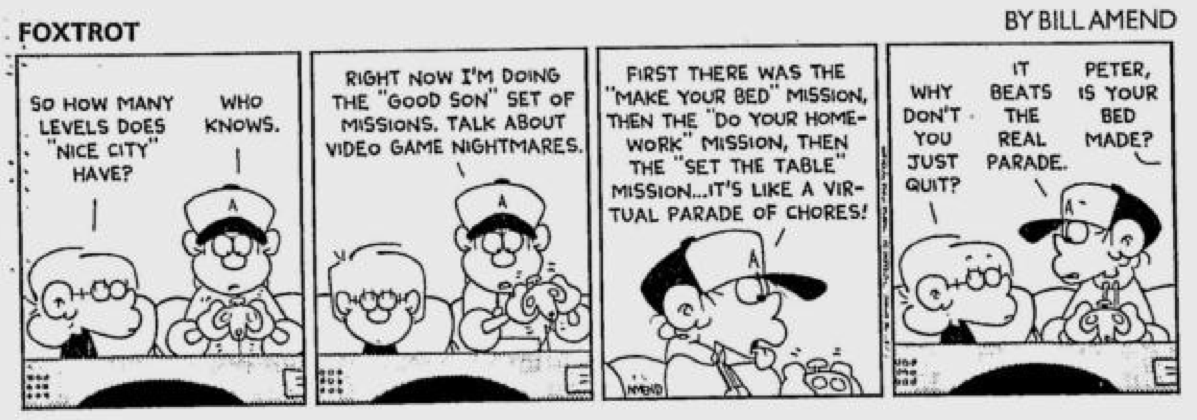
"I know that if I make it to the Doha Asia, I'd be up against tough opposition. But like in the recent SEA Games, I'm ready to give my best for flag and country," Rosario said.

ComicRelief

e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph

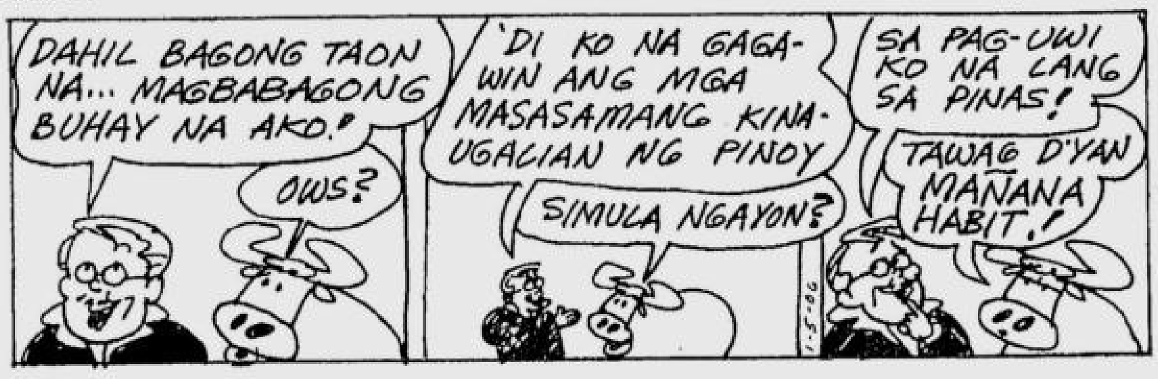
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


SO HOW MANY LEVELS DOES "NICE CITY" HAVE?
WHO KNOWS.
RIGHT NOW I'M DOING THE "GOOD SON" SET OF MISSIONS. TALK ABOUT VIDEO GAME NIGHTMARES.
FIRST THERE WAS THE "MAKE YOUR BED" MISSION, THEN THE "DO YOUR HOMEWORK" MISSION, THEN THE "SET THE TABLE" MISSION...IT'S LIKE A VIRTUAL PARADE OF CHORES!
WHY DON'T YOU JUST QUIT?
IT BEATS THE REAL PARADE.
PETER, IS YOUR BED MADE?
AMEND

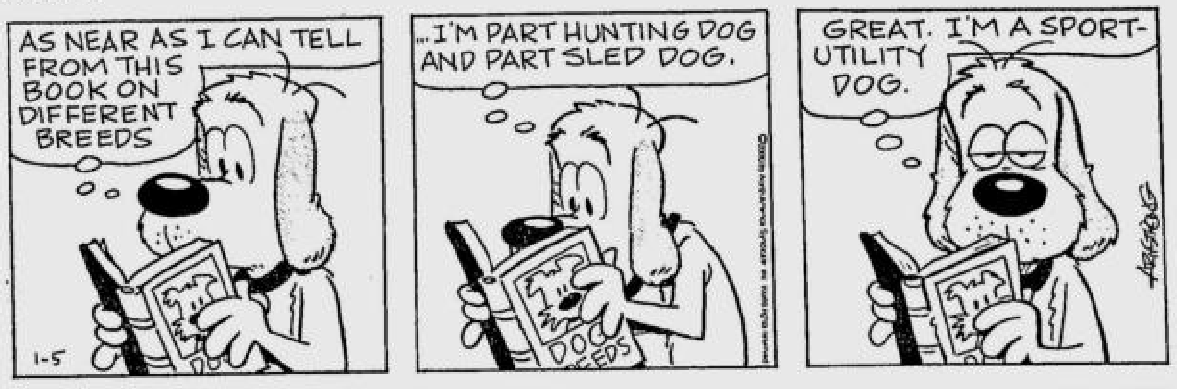
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


DAHIL BAGONG TAON NA... MAGBABAGONG BUHAY NA AKO!
OWS?
'DI KO NA GAGAWIN ANG MGA MASASAMANG KINAUGALIAN NG PINOY
SIMULA NGAYON?
SA PAG-UWI KO NA LANG SA PINAS!
TAWAG D'YAN MAÑANA HABIT!
1-5-06

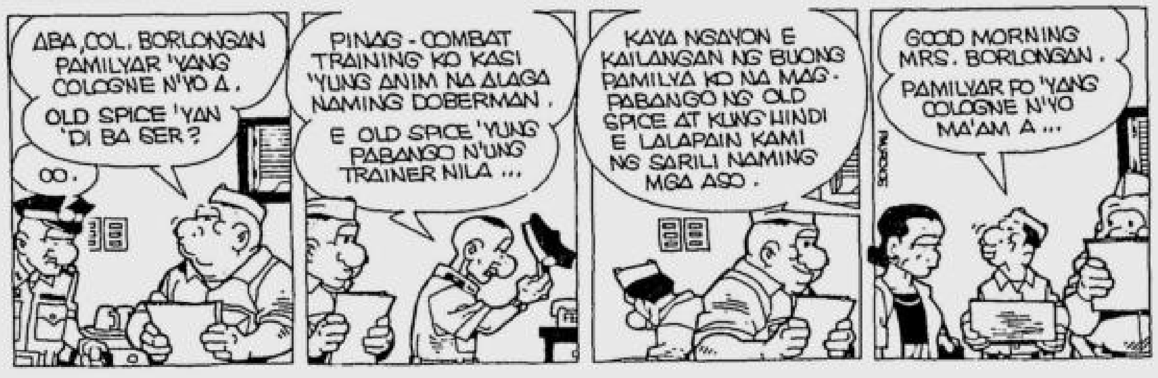
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


AS NEAR AS I CAN TELL FROM THIS BOOK ON DIFFERENT BREEDS
...I'M PART HUNTING DOG AND PART SLED DOG.
GREAT. I'M A SPORT-UTILITY DOG.
DOG BREEDS
1-5
ARMSTRONG

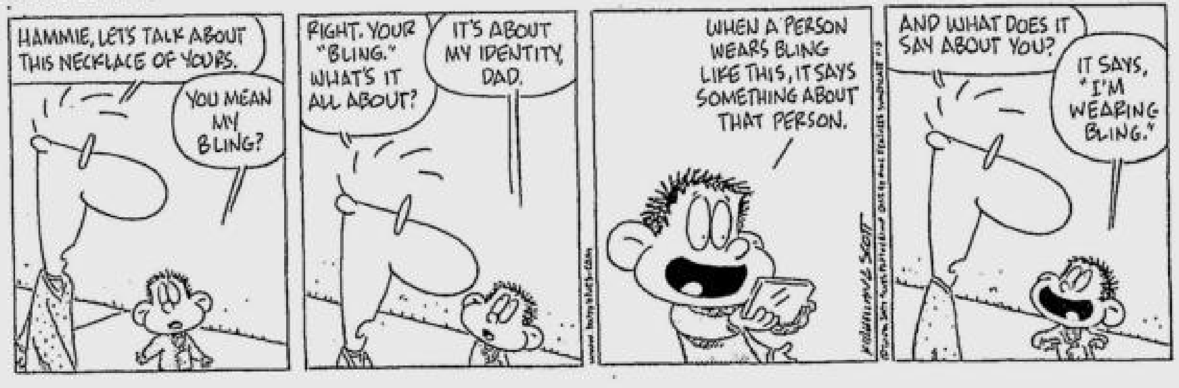
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ABA, COL. BORLONGAN PAMILYAR 'YANG COLOGNE N'YO A.
OLD SPICE 'YAN 'DI BA SER?
OO.
PINAG-COMBAT TRAINING KO KASI 'YUNG ANIM NA ALAGA NAMING DOBERMAN.
E OLD SPICE 'YUNG PABANGO N'UNG TRAINER NILA ...
KAYA NGAYON E KAILANGAN NG BUONG PAMILYA KO NA MAG-PABANGO NG OLD SPICE AT KUNG HINDI E LALAPAIN KAMI NG SARILI NAMING MGA ASO.
GOOD MORNING MRS. BORLONGAN.
PAMILYAR PO 'YANG COLOGNE N'YO MA'AM A ...

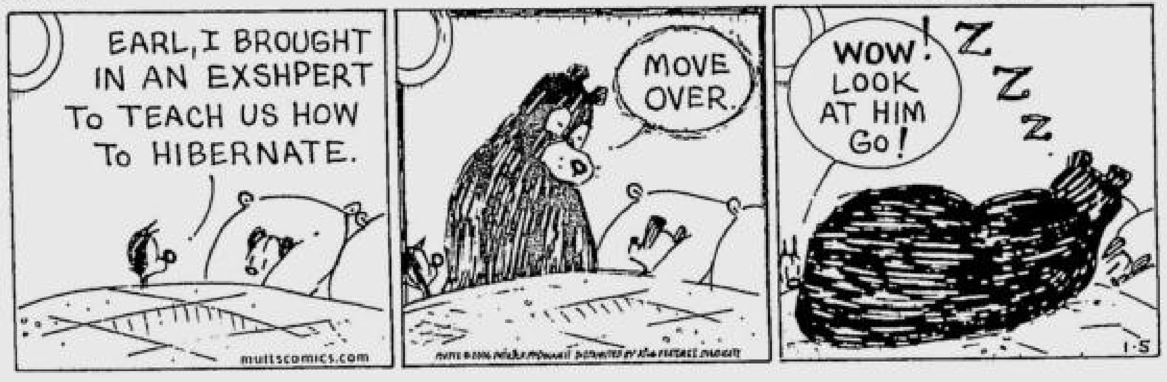
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


HAMMIE, LET'S TALK ABOUT THIS NECKLACE OF YOURS.
YOU MEAN MY BLING?
RIGHT. YOUR "BLING." WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?
IT'S ABOUT MY IDENTITY, DAD.
WHEN A PERSON WEARS BLING LIKE THIS, IT SAYS SOMETHING ABOUT THAT PERSON.
AND WHAT DOES IT SAY ABOUT YOU?
IT SAYS, "I'M WEARING BLING."
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

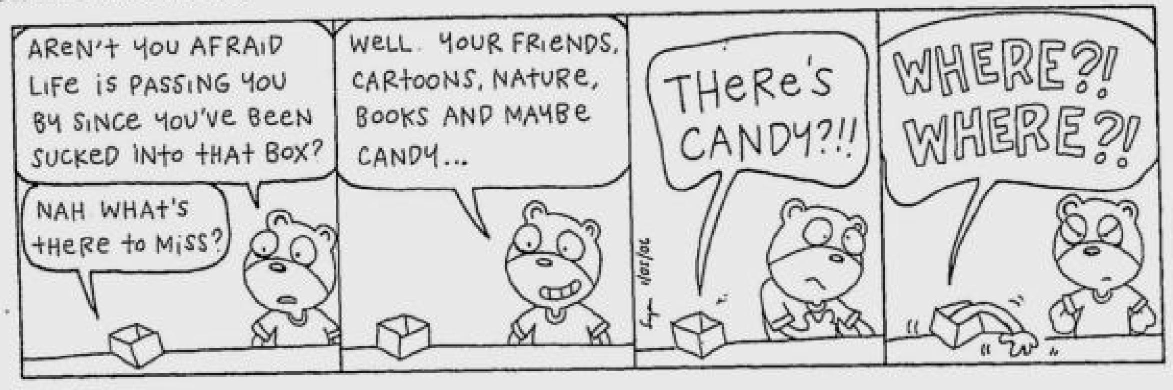
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


EARL, I BROUGHT IN AN EXSHPERT TO TEACH US HOW TO HIBERNATE.
MOVE OVER.
WOW! LOOK AT HIM GO!
Z Z Z
muttscomics.com
1-5

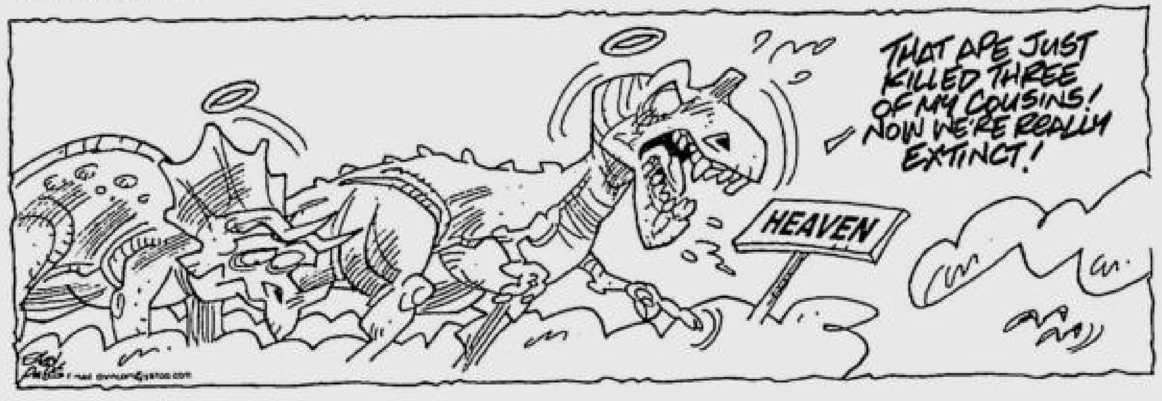
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


AREN'T YOU AFRAID LIFE IS PASSING YOU BY SINCE YOU'VE BEEN SUCKED INTO THAT BOX?
NAH WHAT'S THERE TO MISS?
WELL. YOUR FRIENDS, CARTOONS, NATURE, BOOKS AND MAYBE CANDY...
THERE'S CANDY?!!
WHERE?! WHERE?!

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


THAT APE JUST KILLED THREE OF MY COUSINS! NOW WE'RE REALLY EXTINCT!
HEAVEN

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: No matter what adversities you face, you survive. You have an inner strength that helps you bounce back from anything. You're also optimistic! Your courage and willingness to try different things often bring out the best in others. Big changes await you in the year ahead (perhaps as significant as in 1997).
Birthdate of: Robert Duvall, actor; Umberto Eco, novelist; Diane Keaton, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): The Moon is in your sign today and tomorrow. This gives you a slight advantage over all the other signs. It can also make you a bit more emotional.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Time spent by yourself today will be welcome, if you can manage it. Sometimes a bit of solitude can promote contentment and relaxation. (You've been pushing yourself hard lately.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): A confidential conversation with a female friend might be important today. Maybe you need to do all the talking; maybe you need to do all the listening. Who knows?

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is a good day to talk to bosses, VIPs, parents and authority figures. People notice you and are willing to listen to you today. (Good.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Try to do something different or out of the ordinary today. You're a bit restless and hungry for adventure. Visit a store or restaurant you've never been to before.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is a good day to clarify bills and insurance matters, and to clean up messy, red-tape details. It's also a good time to clearly define what you're willing to do for somebody else.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Because today's Moon opposes your sign, be cooperative and willing to listen. If somebody is looking for a fight today, walk the other way—pronto!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a productive day at work. You have the bit in your teeth, and you're ready to run. You're taking a no-nonsense approach to things. You want results!

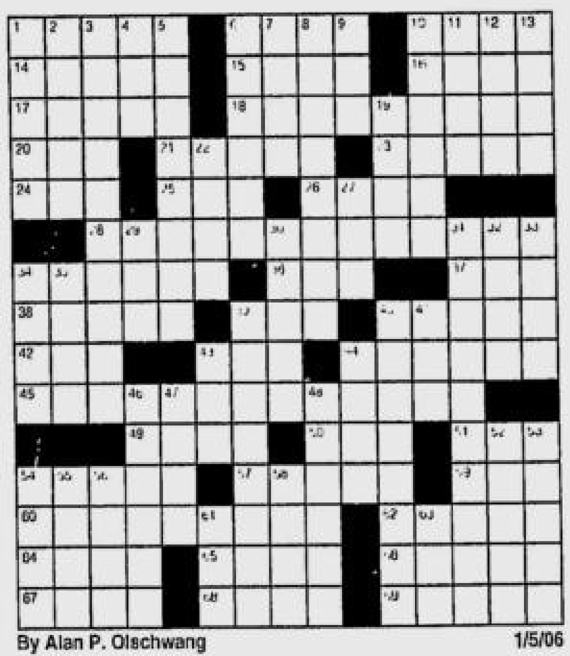
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is a good day for you because the Moon is in your fellow fire sign—Aries. That's why you feel playful, prankish and in a teasing mood.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Quite likely, you'll have to talk to a parent or somebody important in your home today. Keep the conversation polite. Avoid arguments.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Busy day! You're trying to do everything. Keep up the pace. It's the best way to handle this day. Get in high gear and stay there!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You're in the mood to drive a hard bargain in any kind of financial arrangements you make today. You won't back down. Because of this, you might get the upper hand in something.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA
1/5/06

ACROSS
1 Trig. function
6 Caper
10 Kampuchea's neighbor
14 Shanks
15 Utopia
16 Wrinkled fruit
17 Runs at a steady gait
18 Start of J. Paul Getty quote
20 Compass pt.
21 Photog's prompt
23 Twin __ suspension
24 Part 2 of quote
25 PAU's successor
26 Designate
28 Part 3 of quote
34 Empty spaces
36 '50s candidate
37 Sister
38 Draws breath
39 Eye network
40 Computer shortcut
42 Put to work
43 Pub potable
44 Stormy seabird
45 Part 4 of quote
49 Douglas Smith and Fleming
50 A German
51 Part 5 of quote
54 Man from Japan or Afghanistan
57 Barkin or Burstyn
59 Great Lakes canals
60 End of quote
62 Kuwaiti rulers
64 New Mexico art colony
65 Entice
66 Intuit
67 Bancroft or Meara
68 Bill topper
69 Wise ones

DOWN
1 Musical staff sign
2 Maine college town
3 Econo price
4 Afore
5 Priests' garments
6 Point of extinction
7 Pastoral poem
8 Bulwarks
9 Lennon's love
10 Sawmill output
11 Chills and fever
12 Stew pot
13 Thailand, once
19 Outer edges
22 Brits' raincoats
27 Some sloths
29 Aries article
30 Scimitar's cousin
31 Growing
32 Certain
33 Organic compound
34 Sad
35 Kudrow of "Friends"
39 Sort of sale
40 Scrooge trait
41 Crowd fig.
43 Arista
44 Ballet movement
46 Serve as a go-between
47 Sudden jerk
48 Annie Sullivan's pupil
52 Ancient Scandinavian
53 Apothecary measures
54 Dog star
55 The Man
56 Press
58 Former Italian bread
61 Aerial RRs
63 __ culpa

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

T	E	S	T	■	A	C	T	S	■	A	B	Y	S	M
R	U	L	E	■	S	H	O	O	■	S	L	O	P	E
I	R	O	N	■	S	A	I	L	■	T	O	G	A	S
M	O	P	T	H	E	F	L	O	O	R	W	I	T	H
■	■	■	■	U	S	E	■	■	B	A	Y	■	■	■
A	C	R	O	S	S	■	P	R	E	Y	■	S	U	R
D	R	O	P	S	■	D	U	E	S	■	A	N	N	A
D	U	S	T	Y	O	U	R	S	E	L	F	O	F	F
L	E	E	S	■	U	N	I	T	■	O	R	B	I	T
E	L	S	■	S	T	E	M	■	F	R	O	S	T	S
■	■	■	S	A	G	■	■	S	E	E	■	■	■	■
W	A	S	H	Y	O	U	R	H	A	N	D	S	O	F
A	R	E	A	S	■	P	E	A	S	■	R	I	M	E
S	T	E	N	O	■	T	A	R	T	■	A	L	I	T
H	Y	P	E	S	■	O	D	D	S	■	M	O	T	E

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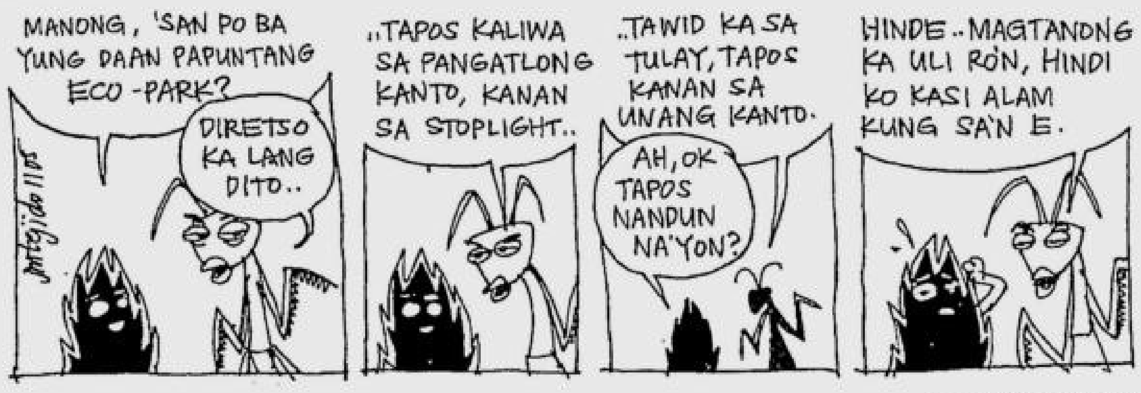
1/5/06

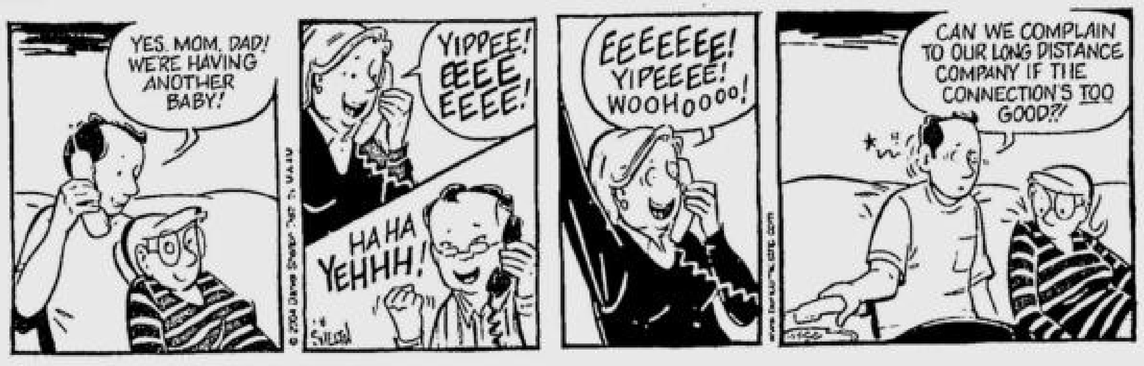
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MANONG, 'SAN PO BA YUNG DAAN PAPUNTANG ECO-PARK?
DIRETSO KA LANG DITO..
..TAPOS KALIWA SA PANGATLONG KANTO, KANAN SA STOPLIGHT..
..TAWID KA SA TULAY, TAPOS KANAN SA UNANG KANTO.
AH, OK TAPOS NANDUN NA'YON?
HINDE.. MAGTANONG KA ULI RON, HINDI KO KASI ALAM KUNG SA'N E.

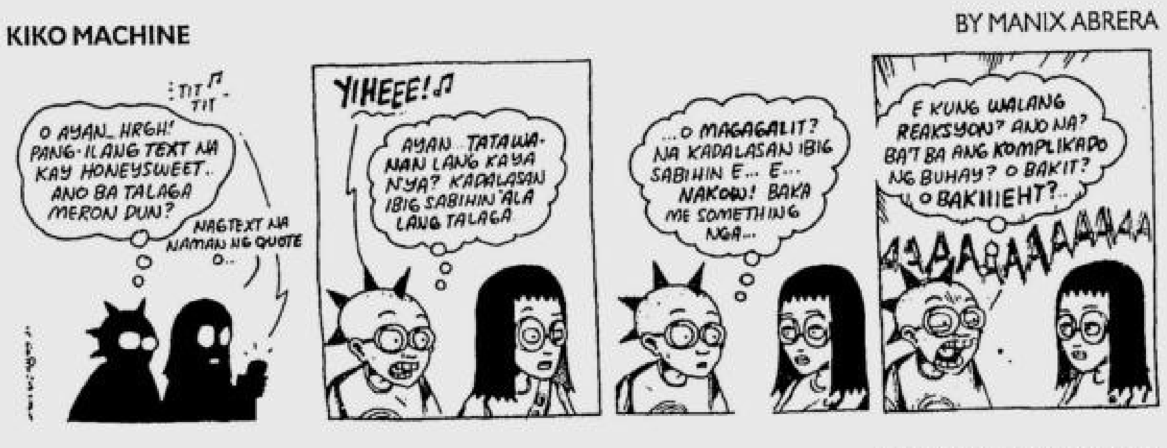
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


YES. MOM, DAD! WE'RE HAVING ANOTHER BABY!
YIPPEE! EEEE EEEE!
HA HA YEHHH!
EEEEEEE! YIPEEEE! WOOHOOOO!
CAN WE COMPLAIN TO OUR LONG DISTANCE COMPANY IF THE CONNECTION'S TOO GOOD?!

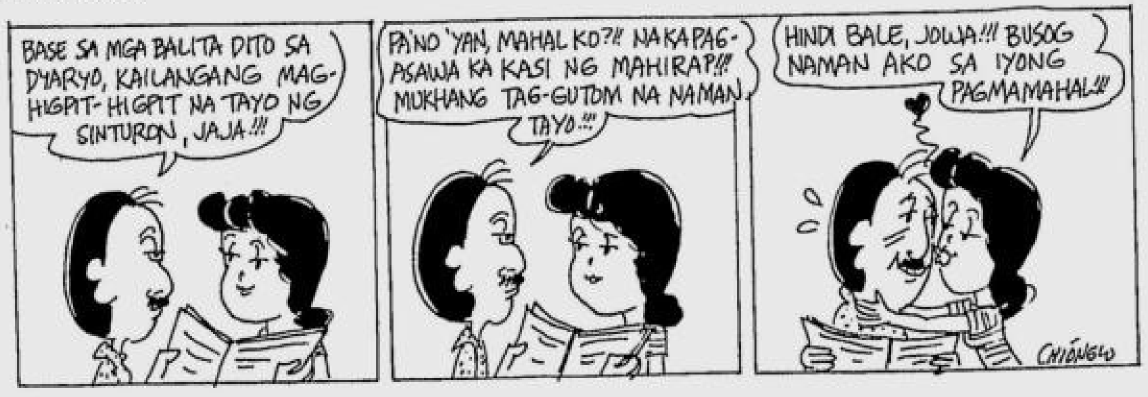
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


TIT TIT
O AYAN_ HRGH! PANG-ILANG TEXT NA KAY HONEYSWEET.. ANO BA TALAGA MERON DUN?
NAGTEXT NA NAMAN NG QUOTE O..
YIHEEE!♫
AYAN TATAWANAN LANG KAYA NYA? KADALASAN IBIG SABIHIN 'ALA LANG TALAGA
...O MAGAGALIT? NA KADALASAN IBIG SABIHIN E... E... NAKOW! BAKA ME SOMETHING NGA...
E KUNG WALANG REAKSYON? ANO NA? BA'T BA ANG KOMPLIKADO NG BUHAY? O BAKIT? O BAKIIIEHT?..
AAAAAAAAAAAA

LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


BASE SA MGA BALITA DITO SA DYARYO, KAILANGANG MAGHIGPIT-HIGPIT NA TAYO NG SINTURON, JAJA!!!
PA'NO 'YAN, MAHAL KO?!! NAKAPAG-ASAWA KA KASI NG MAHIRAP!!! MUKHANG TAG-GUTOM NA NAMAN TAYO!!!
HINDI BALE, JOWA!!! BUSOG NAMAN AKO SA IYONG PAGMAMAHAL!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

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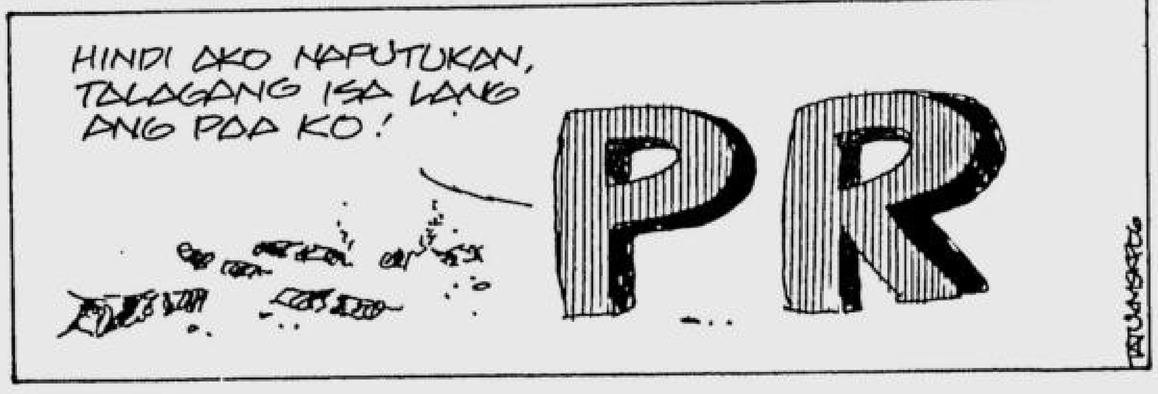

HINDI AKO NAPUTUKAN, TALAGANG ISA LANG ANG PDA KO!
PR

NBC caging starts today

VALENCIA CITY—INAUGURAL CHAMPION Tribu Sugbu leads four teams vying for honors starting today in the 5th Day Charter Open invitational basketball tournament here which serves as the second leg of the Nature's Spring-NBC pre-season series.

Also entered are host Valencia Golden Harvest of Mayor Jose Galario Jr., Pagadian's Aqua World and the North Cotabato Braves.

Cash prizes of P50,000 and P30,000 await the champion and runner-up, according to NBC secretary general Tito Palma.

Valencia and the Braves clash after the 5 p.m. rites, while the Skygo/Sirlitz-backed Tribesmen of businessmen Lito Gillamac and Mario King face Pagadian-based Aqua World at 7 p.m.

"The people here are excited," said Mayor Galario of the tourney. "We're grateful to NBC for allowing us to hold this tournament."

The Nature's Spring-NBC pre-season series is also supported by Sulpicio Lines, Spring Cooking Oil, Molten and Prime Channel.

"The pre-season series paves the way for the opening of our regular competition on March 10," said NBC president and national shooter Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla.

Pagadian is the newest NBC expansion team.

KENNETH San Andres of Revtex Team scoots home to victory in the Expert Open category of the Speedfest at the Palo Alto Racetrack.

San Andres wins twice

RISING STAR KENNETH SAN Andres cemented his status as the future of motocross after clinching both the Expert Open and Expert 125 titles of the Red Horse Beer-Smart Buddy Speedfest Championship at the Palo Alto Racetrack in Baras, Rizal, recently.

San Andres, the 2004 Rookie of the Year, did four masterful rides in the two motos of the Expert Open and 125 to trace the tracks of Revtex teammate and certified great Glenn Aguilar, who is the overall Pro Open champion in the Speedfest.

A first year IT student of the Manila Central University, San Andres was already assured of the two titles even before he boarded his racing machine in the Speedfest. But San Andres still went all out. With Revtex oil pumping his racing machine to perfection, San Andres bested rivals Geovani Leyva and Jimboy Marcelo.

"There's nothing like finishing the season on a winning note," said San Andres, who is also the sixth-best rider in the Asian region.

Pacquiao, 3 other RP pugs meet in LA

THE WILD CARD GYM IN LOS ANGELES looked like a Filipino household yesterday when four of the country's finest fighters, all honing up under renowned trainer Freddie Roach, converged there for the first time.

Z "The Dream" Gorres and Czar Amonsot, both slated to see action on Feb. 3, arrived at the gym around 10:30 yesterday morning together with their manager Tony Aldeguer and Filipino trainer Edito "Ala" Villamor.

Business agent Michael Koncz was also with the group.

Roach greeted and welcomed the group along with physical conditioning coach Justin Fortune, who knew Gorres from his previous stint at the gym a year ago.

As the two trained, Fil-Am Brian Viloria, the reigning World Boxing Council light flyweight champion, arrived with his father and greeted Gorres and Amonsot.

At the end of their training session, Filipino champion Manny Paquiao arrived looking fit and ready for his Jan. 21 rematch with Mexican hero Erik Morales.

Gorres and Amonsot worked out for the first time at Wild Card since arriving last Dec. 27.

After a 15-minute warm-up, Gorres and Amonsot immediately plunged into action, hitting the mitts for four rounds. Roach handled Gorres, while Villamor took care of Amonsot.

A series of heavy bag drills was followed by speed workout where Gorres and Amonsot did two rounds each on the double end ball and speed ball. Abdominal sit-ups was the final phase of their training for the day preparatory for their sparing sessions slated today. *Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor*

Boxer unpaid after loss

A FILIPINO boxer who fought and lost in his crack at the WBC Youth minimumweight title in Thailand last Dec. 23 has yet to be paid according to Philboxing.com, the most updated and comprehensive website on RP fighters. Manager Rex "Wakee" Salud said unless Alex Aroy is paid, he wont allow his other ward, Jojo Bardon, to fight in another promotion by a certain Bong Obero in Thailand. Aroy, according to Boxrec.com, lost a unanimous decision to Oleydong Sithchanerchai at the Rajabhak University in Petchaboon, Thailand. *Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor*

Wondrous PBA innovation

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

THE GOOD THING ABOUT PBA 2005 was the stunning innovation introduced by Commissioner Noli Eala, first, by making just two conferences for the season and second, by giving all nine teams practically equal chances to battle it out for the second conference crown.

It couldn't get any better than this.

The first pivotal aspect of the change is, it was designed for flag and country. You may not have realized it but the two-conference format had been adopted with the end in view of providing the national team with key PBA players for battles abroad. To a certain extent, the move proved beneficial to the country as Chot Reyes' San Miguel-backed national squad laced with PBA stalwarts and promising amateurs did a good account of itself in three tournaments abroad. It even won one title.

It was just too bad that the noble PBA mission had been torpedoed when politics reared its ugly head, triggering the 38-man Olympic general assembly to expel the BAP from the Olympic roster on grounds of conduct unbecoming a member of the Olympic movement. The vote was 33-2, with 3 abstentions.

The BAP sought help from the Fiba, asking mainly the world governing body for basketball to overturn the general assembly decision expelling it from the POC. But instead of the Fiba addressing the appeal, it suspended the Philippines from participating in all Fiba-sanctioned events worldwide.

What a shame, indeed.

As a result, basketball was not played for the first time in the 23rd SEA Games won by the Philippines astoundingly in December 2005.

But a more bitter blow than that was inflicted on us when, as a result of the Fiba suspension, the country missed its chance to fight for one of two slots in the world championship in Saitama City, Japan, this year. Easily, we would have won that berth, which went to Malaysia, whose squad it had sent to Doha, Qatar appeared patsy when ranged against Chot Reyes' team's credentials.

Such was the fate that befell Philippine basketball last year.

But that is now water under the bridge, so to speak, and life has got to move on.

Thus, in the ongoing San Mig Coffee-PBA Fiesta Conference, we see a unique format that has become the envy of rival leagues and made PBA fans salivate day in and day out.

The spirit of the second conference format is such that achievers are amply rewarded while the not-so-lucky are given the chance to redeem themselves and climb out of the pits even with their unpalatable win-loss records deep into the tournament.

Thus, we see the Purefoods Chunkee Giants enjoying an extended furlough never before seen in the league, after nailing the first semifinal berth with their 10-6 record after the eliminations.

So elated was Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio with his team's sterling achievement that he let his boys enjoy the holidays to the fullest.

I can only agree with that.

It's called giving credit where credit is due and at the same time rewarding the truly deserving. The Giants earned it and they ought to relish the fruits of their labor.

***

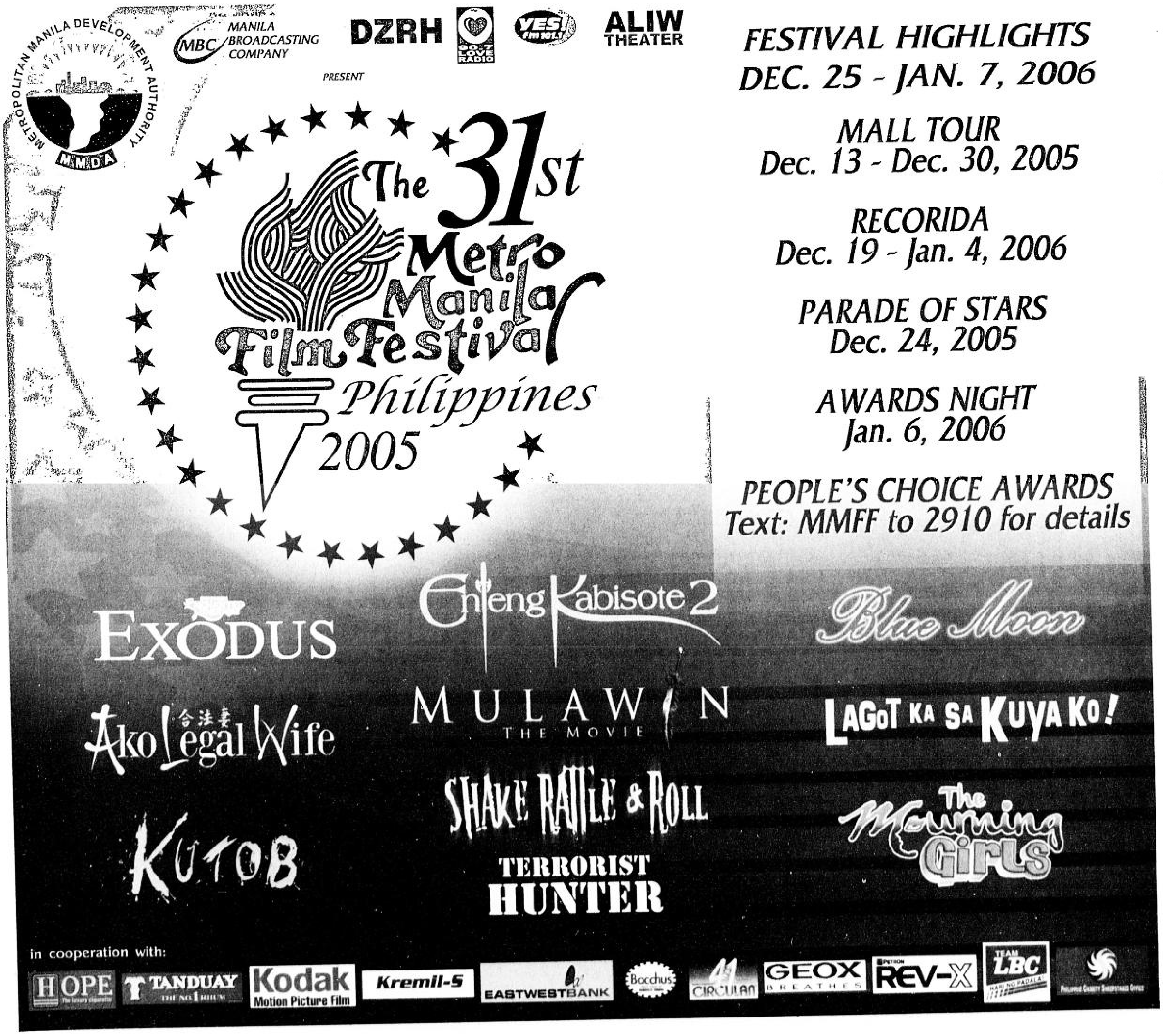
THE CAYETANOS. Ren Ren Cayetano, the former international jungolfer, has tied the knot. It was held in Cebu and this gave the Cayetanos the opportunity to spend the holidays out of Manila. Said Sen. Pia Cayetano, "The death of our Dad (Sen. Rene Cayetano) still hurts and Ren's wedding in Cebu gave us the chance to spend Christmas far from Manila. Dad's demise is really still painful to us."

***

FASTBREAK. Coach Dayong J. Mendoza of Purefoods Chunkee Giants is calling on his JASMS classmates to join the reunion on Jan. 8 at Dencio's in Capitol Hills Golf Club in Diliman, Q.C. Call Dayong at 0915-3888812 for details.

***

Comments to menju@pldtdsl.net



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SPORTS

Mayweather Boxer of the Year

MEXICO CITY—THE WORLD Boxing Council chose super lightweight champion Floyd Mayweather as its boxer of the year on Tuesday, one of several annual awards announced by the WBC.

Mayweather won the super lightweight title in January 2005 with an eighth-round TKO of Henry Bruseles, adding to his super featherweight and lightweight titles he won earlier.

He also won his debut bout in the welterweight division in 2005, a sixth-round TKO of Sharmba Mitchell in November.

Another US boxer, Jermain Taylor, received honorable mention as the best boxer.

The council declared the May 7 lightweight bout won by American Diego Corrales over Mexico's Jose Luis Castillo on a 10th round TKO as its "best fight of the year."

The most dramatic fight of the year was judged to be the March decision in which Mexico's Erik Morales beat the Philippines' Manny Pacquiao.

Mexican Marco Antonio Barrera was awarded the knockout of the year for his right to the head of South Africa's Mzonke Fana in the second round of their April bout.

The honors will be presented Jan. 28-31 in the Caribbean coast resort of Cancun. *AP*

MAYWEATHER

Hearns assaults own son

DETROIT, MICHIGAN—FORMER seven-time world champion Thomas 'Hit Man' Hearns was charged with assault after police responded to an incident at his home involving his 13-year-old son.

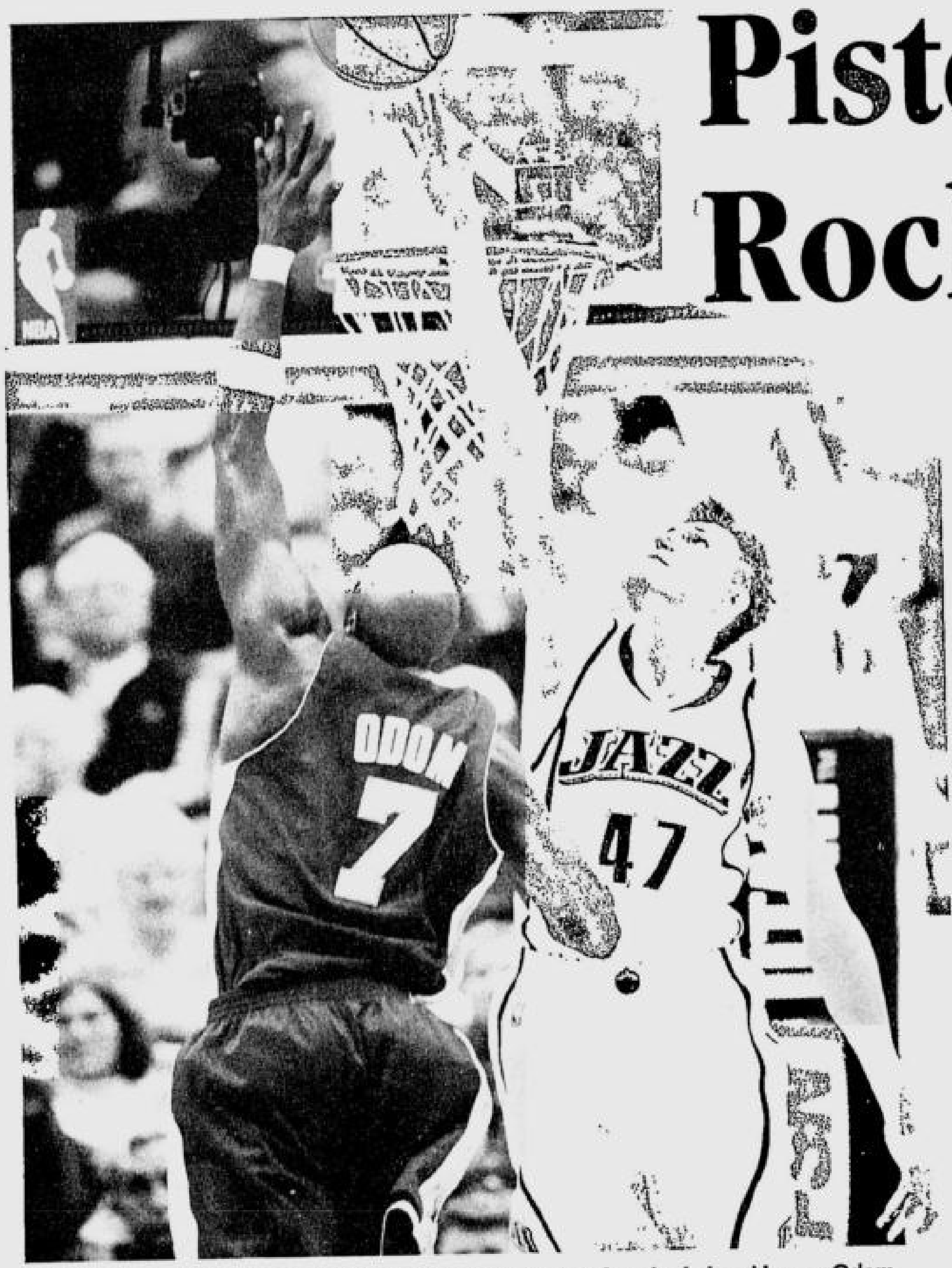
The 47-year-old Hearns is expected to appear in court on Friday for a preliminary hearing in front of a judge, the Detroit Free Press reported on Tuesday.

Police charged Hearns with misdemeanor assault and battery following the incident which occurred on Sunday. He was released on $10,000 bond Monday and ordered to have no contact with his son.

Police went to Hearns' Detroit-area home aft er being called by Hearns' wife. The boy suffered minor injuries, including a black eye, and was treated at the scene.

After a five-year hiatus, Hearns returned to the ring in July where he beat John Long in a bout stopped in the 8th round. *AFP*

Pistons thwart Magic; Rockets blast Wizards



UTAH's Andrei Kirilenko goes high to block a shot by Los Angeles Lakers' Lamar Odom during their NBA game Tuesday. The Jazz beat the Lakers, 90-80. AP

NEW YORK—CHAUNCEY Billups scored a regular season career-high 37 points as the Detroit Pistons won their 25th game of the season, downing the Orlando Magic, 108-99, in Auburn Hills on Tuesday.

Billups was 9-for-15 from the floor and had four three-pointers as the Pistons improved their NBA-best record to 25-4.

He also added nine assists as the 2004 NBA Finals Most Valuable Player increased his chances at an All-Star selection and possible regular season MVP consideration later this year.

Detroit saw its nine-game winning streak snapped with a loss at Cleveland on Saturday, but the Pistons rebounded smartly to become the first team to win 25 games this season.

"We had a letdown against Cleveland, and we needed to turn that around," Billups said.

"We couldn't let it continue." Detroit coach Flip Saunders felt it was going to be a good night for Billups, who once scored 40 points in a playoff game.

"He felt good tonight and when he feels that good, we're just going to let him go."

Richard Hamilton added 25 points for the Pistons, while Tayshaun Prince chipped in with 12 and Ben Wallace added 11 points and nine rebounds.

Dwight Howard had 22 points and 14 rebounds for the Magic, who trailed by just two points and the half and by the same margin after three quarters.

Jameer Nelson added 18 points for Orlando (12-16), as the Magic saw its three-game winning streak snapped.

In Washington, Tracy McGrady scored 38 points as the Houston Rockets beat the Wizards, 123-111.

Juwan Howard added 24 points and Rafer Alston scored 17 points and had 10 assists for the Rockets.

Gilbert Arenas scored 44 points in a losing cause and Caron Butler added 20 points for the Wizards.

In Atlanta, Chris Bosh scored 27 points and had 12 rebounds as the Toronto Raptors beat the Hawks, 108-97.

Mike James added 28 points for the Raptors.

Al Harrington, Joe Johnson and Zaza Pachulia both scored 18 points for the Hawks.

In Memphis, Eddie Jones scored 23 points as the Grizzlies beat the Golden State Warriors, 104-94.

Pau Gasol added 21 points for the Grizzlies.

Jason Richardson scored 20 points and Derek Fisher added 18 points for the Warriors.

In Dallas, Josh Howard scored 21 points and had 10 rebounds as the Mavericks beat the Portland Trail Blazers, 95-81.

Dirk Howitzki and Jason Terry both scored 22 points for the Mavericks.

COMPLETE RESULTS: Toronto 108, Atlanta 97; Houston 123, Washington 111; Detroit 108, Orlando 99; Memphis 104, Golden State 94; Dallas 95, Portland 81; Utah 90, LA Lakers 80; Philadelphia 111, Sacramento 98. Reuters

SOLAR Sports will air the Portland-San Antonio tussle at 9:30 a.m.

Sonics fire coach

SEATTLE—BOB WEISS WAS FIRED as coach of the Seattle SuperSonics on Tuesday, with his NBA team struggling at 13-17 after having won its division last year.

Weiss, in his first year coaching the Sonics, was replaced by assistant Bob Hill, the team said. *AP*

Federer, Davydenko win in Doha

DOHA, QATAR—TOP-RANKED ROGER Federer breezed through his first match of 2006 while another former champion Younes El Aynaoui grabbed the spotlight with an upset victory in the Qatar Open first round on Tuesday.

After a sprained ankle troubled Federer at the end of last year, he hit the ground running by casting aside Czech qualifier Ivo Minar, 6-1, 6-3.

"It's great to find some momentum early in the season," said Federer, who has won his first tournament in three of the past four years.

El Aynaoui, the 2002 champ and finalist 10 years ago, was previously dogged by foot and shoulder problems. He didn't win a match in 2004 and won only once on the main tour in 2005.

But on Tuesday, the lanky Moroccan showed little signs of rust as he outhustled fourth-seeded Sebastien Grosjean of France, much to the joy of hundreds of Arab fans.

El Aynaoui broke in the seventh game with a stinging pass to go up 4-3 and then hardly looked back, though there were extended spells in the second set when Grosjean's artistry had him groping for answers. However, El Aynaoui completed the victory with a love game.

Federer will next face 2000 champ Fabrice Santoro after the French veteran beat Austrian qualifier Oliver Marach, 6-0, 2-6, 6-4.

Second-seeded Nikolay Davydenko of Russia, who won a career-high 56 matches last year, ousted Christophe Rochus of Belgium, 6-3, 6-1, but countryman and No. 5 Igor Andreev lost to Italian qualifier Potito Starace, 7-5, 1-6, 7-5. *AP*

RACING TIPS

TOP CHOICE
(Edgar Mendez)

Race 1 (Tri) Erica's Talent (4), Tellmenokes (5), Mutiara (1)
Race 2 (Pent/Tri) Daldalera/Mountain Egale (7), Bunker Buster (8), Step on Gas (9), La Signorina (1), House of Riches (5)
Race 3 (Qrt/Tri) Ocean Deep/Eye Candy (6), Golden Fantasy (3), Manila Smile (4), Luck of the Irish (5)
Race 4 (Qrt/Tri) Odyssey (5), The Strategist (1), Pride of Mandaue (3), Sir Olizon (5), Korek Ka Dyan (6)
Race 6 (Pent/Tri) Semper Spirit/ Hakuna Matata (8), Ahoy My Boy (1), U are my Sunshine (7), D As In Dixie (4), Xtreme Heat (6)
Race 7 (Qrt/Tri) Empire State (4) Divine Right (6), IN D Wind (5)
Race 8 (Qrt/Tri) LA Tondena/Guad (7) Real Queen (5), Virgina (1), I Love This Game (3)
Race 9 (S6/Qrt/Tri) Magic Dancer/MAno PO (7), The Dominator (23), Ravishing RAlly (6), Silver CHo Cho (10), Southern Prince (4)

Hingis continues surge with hardcourt victory

GOLD COAST, AUSTRALIA—FIVE-TIME Grand Slam winner Martina Hingis continued her comeback Wednesday with a straight sets win in the second round of the Australian women's hardcourt event, proving she could be a serious contender at the Australian Open later this month.

Former No. 1 Hingis took an hour and 10 minutes to oust world No. 35 Czech Klara Koukalova, 6-3, 6-2, from the $239,000 (176,350) Gold Coast tournament.

The victory puts Hingis, 25, on course to meet World No. 50 Spaniard Nuria Llagostera Vives, who caused a major upset Wednesday with a 6-3, 6-1 trouncing of No. 2 seed Francesca Schiavone of Italy.

And it shows she is gaining form ahead of next week's Sydney International and the Australian Open which begins on Jan. 16.

Hingis retired in 2002 with ankle, foot and heel injuries before making an abortive comeback attempt in a WTA event in Thailand in February last year when she lost to Germany's Marlene Weingartner.

But her 6-1, 6-1 first-round victory over Venezuela's Maria Vento-Kabchi on Monday marked a more determined return to professional tennis. Earlier Wednesday defending champion Patty Schnyder of Switzerland beat American Angela Haynes, 6-3, 6-0. *AFP*

ITALIAN Francesca Schiavone does a scrambling between-the-legs return. dV

SPORTSWATCH

Couriers clinches MBL crown

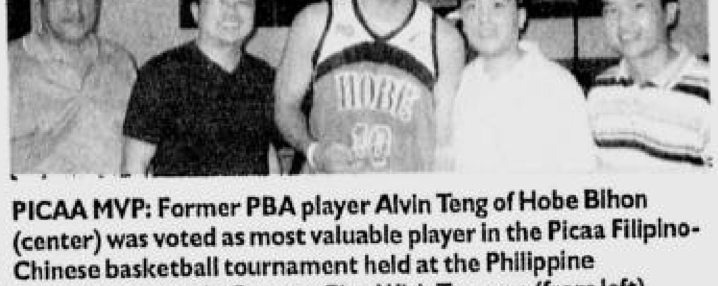
COURIERS brought down Aquady's, 96-97, to capture the title in the fifth MBL-Chairman's Cup at the Aquinas gym in San Juan recently. University of Manila star Ryan Regalado powered the Couriers to victory in this season-ending tournament organized by Millennium Basketball League (MBL). Regalado, the 2005 Naascu MVP, scored 14 of his 25 points in the payoff period for the Alex Wang-mentored Couriers. Laurence Garcia added 16 points, Richard Litonjua had 15 and ex-pro Paeng Santos 10 points for Couriers. San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito awarded the trophy to the winning team, assisted by MBL president George Palaran, Alex Jaleco and Loreto Tolentino.

Kidz Hoops holds cage leveling

KIDZ Hoops, the only community-inspired basketball league open to all boys and girls ages 8 to 14, will hold its 1st Conference leveling on Jan. 15 at the RFM Gym on Pioneer Street, Mandaluyong City from 2 to 4 p.m. right after registration at 1 p.m. Kidz Hoops offers a positive learning experience for both beginners and experienced players alike. The league's goal is to provide recreational opportunities for the youth in a safe and organized environment. It also aims to promote the positive effects of physical fitness and exercise along with sportsmanship and good conduct. Playing jerseys will be provided. For inquiries call tel./fax 3710639 or visit www.kidzhoops.com

70 fights at Las Piñas Coliseum

WITH more than 70 fights lined up, Las Piñas Coliseum's season opener 3-cock derby starts at 5 p.m. today with cockers from Metro Manila and nearby provinces participating. To host the event is former Mayor Nene Aguilar, who will again donate part of proceeds to Las Piñas City's Clean and Green project. Two refrigerators will be given as bonus to the champions, while P1,000 additional prize will be given per win. For inquiries, call 873-1040 and 874-3910. Las Piñas Coliseum also presents its version of the popular "Fastest Win One–Cock Ulutan" on Jan. 16, with P500,000 guaranteed prize.



PICAA MVP: Former PBA player Alvin Teng of Hobe Bihon (center) was voted as most valuable player in the Picaa Filipino-Chinese basketball tournament held at the Philippine Buddhacare gym in Quezon City. With Teng are (from left) commissioner Eusebio "Boy" Ong, BAP vice president Christian Tan and Hobe Bihon team owners Bobby and Marcelo Co.

Vietnam police to probe 2003 SEAG football

HANOI—VIETNAMESE FOOTBALL OFFICIALS have asked police to investigate allegations of match-fixing at the Southeast Asian Games here three years ago, in the latest twist to a scandal that has gripped the nation.

The announcement comes after four members of the national under-23 side have already been detained on suspicion of fixing matches in the most recent SEA Games in the Philippines, last month.

According to police newspaper An Ninh Thu Do, several Vietnamese players slowed their play down in a "suspicious way" in a match against Malaysia in 2003, allowing the visitors to obtain a draw after full-time.

In overtime, Vietnam scored a goal to enter the final against Thailand, which it lost.

"The scenario of this game was exactly the same as the one of the match between Vietnam and Malaysia in the Philippines in December," an official from the Vietnamese Football Federation said.

The football-mad nation is going through the worst crisis gripping the game since 1975, and the story has been on the front pages of local newspapers for weeks.

The scandal has also led to the resignation of federation vice president Le The Tho and the sacking of coach Le Thuy Hai, one of three assistants to national coach Alfred Riedl of Austria, by club side Danang.

State media said Wednesday that Nguyen Huu Thang, head coach of the central Song Lam Nghe An club, was now also being questioned. *AFP*

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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"I SHOULDN'T talk too much," AiAi says, after a scolding by network exec. PHOTOS BY JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Top contenders for MMFF awards

By Marinel R. Cruz

RICA and Marvin are "dark horses."

ZSA ZSA PADILLA, JENNYLYN MERCADO and Rica Peralejo lead 20 contenders for Best Actress in the ongoing 31st Metro Manila Film Festival, INQUIRER Entertainment learned on Tuesday.

The "Gabi ng Parangal," or awards night, is set tomorrow night at the Aliw Theater, Star City complex, in Pasay City.

Zsa Zsa is nominated for her role as Chona Chong in Joel Lamangan's comedy, "Ako Legal Wife: Mano Po 4?" while Jennylyn stars in "Blue Moon," another Lamangan film, and Rica in Joey Reyes' thriller, "Kutob."

"Rica [is the] dark horse," said Wilson Tieng, a member of the MMFF selection committee. "So is Marvin Agustin for Best Actor. His work in 'Kutob' is exceptional."

TOP/ A2-4

'Oops, I did it ... again!'

By the INQUIRER Entertainment Staff

TAKE FIVE

COMEDIAN AIAI delas Alas has admitted that an ABS-CBN executive reprimanded her for making "negative comments" about the network during a press conference for her movie "Shake, Rattle and Roll 6."

Delas Alas said Cory Vidanes, ABS-CBN senior vice president for television, asked to discuss with her statements she had made expressing how unhappy she was over the Kapamilya network's lack of interest in promoting her TV shows.

Delas Alas is a mainstay of Channel 2's late night sitcom, "My Juan and Only," and host of the show biz talk program, "Entertainment Konek."

"I didn't mean to offend anyone. I merely expressed my opinion. It's my fault—I'm so talkative. Next time, *hindi na 'ko dadaldal*," Delas Alas told us during a visit to the INQUIRER offices in Makati City. "The meeting went okay. I have apologized to her."

She recounted: "During the press con, reporters asked me, '*Masaya ka ba sa Dos*?' My answer was, '*Mas magiging masaya lahat kung kahit* one-fourth *lang ng ginawa nilang pag*-promote *sa* PBB ("Pinoy Big Brother") *ay ginawa nila sa lahat ng* shows.' What I said was true. But I guess I was just used to having many shows on ABS-CBN last year."

According to her, Vidanes mostly explained the need to promote PBB. "Tita Cory said it was because the people were clamoring for it. I got the point."

Are you happy about doing another "Shake Rattle Roll" movie [for the Metro Manila Film Festival this year]?

Actually, nostalgic *ang dating nito sa akin*. I was in "Shake" 1, 2 and 3. The last one was with IC Mendoza and Gina Alajar. *Dalaga na si* IC *ngayon* (laughs). Peque Gallaga directed all my "Shake" episodes. Now, I'm with Gloria Romero, Biboy Ramirez, Marco Alcaraz, Yasmien Kurdi and Rainier Castillo.

What's it like working with Gloria Romero?

She's very professional. If you tell her to be there at 6 a.m., she will be there at 6 a.m., made up, and all her lines memorized.

We heard you had a problem with Rainier.

Yes. It happened on the set. He was seven hours late. But it turned out [that] it wasn't his fault. He was simply following instructions. He said sorry. *Naawa ako*.

Didn't a similar incident happen to you before?

Yes, several years ago. I had to leave the set of Vic Sotto's "Okay Ka Fairy Ko" to go to Broadway Centrum in Quezon City for Martin Nievera's show, "MAD." *Pagbalik ko nagkaroon ng problema*. I was very scared *kasi haharap ako kay* Tita Chat (the late Charito Solis). *Tinatakot pa ako ng* staff. They kept saying, "*Mag*-sorry *ka, mag*-sorry *ka*."

Did she get mad?

No *naman*. I told her, "Tita Chat, sorry *po. Hindi na po mauulit*." She said, "Don't do it again. Aiza (Seguerra, child star in the cast) needs to sleep on time."

I also had a bad experience while filming "Wooly Booly: Ang Classmate Kong Alien." The crew forgot to tell me I was no longer needed on the set. I waited from 10 a.m. to 4 a.m. of the next day. When I found out that I wasn't included in the line-up, *namura ko 'yung* assistant director. I walked out.

How's your American ex-boyfriend?

'OOPS/ A2-4

Changes at the CEB?

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

SINCE THE DEATH OF FORmer Cinema Evaluation Board (CEB) chair Zeneida "Bibot" Amador in November 2004 and the departure of former Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP) head Laurice Guillen in October 2005, rumors of major changes in the CEB have been circulating industry-wide.

New chair

The CEB—created along with the FDCP through Republic Act No. 9167—falls under the FDCP and is tasked to give tax rebates to well-crafted local films. Rated A films are granted 100 percent amusement tax rebate; films graded B get 65 percent rebate.

An insider informed INQUIRER Entertainment on Tuesday that Christine Dayrit will soon assume the post of CEB chair, currently occupied by Jackie Atienza who also acts as FDCP head.

According to the FDCP website, Dayrit, currently a CEB member, is a newspaper columnist and PR director of the Miladay Group of Companies. She has been a member of the executive committee of the Manila Film Festival (and, later, the Cinemanila Film Festival) for the past three years.

As executive producer for her own Christine Films, she released TV movies like "Walang Katapusang Wakas" and "Habu-

CHANGES/ A2-4

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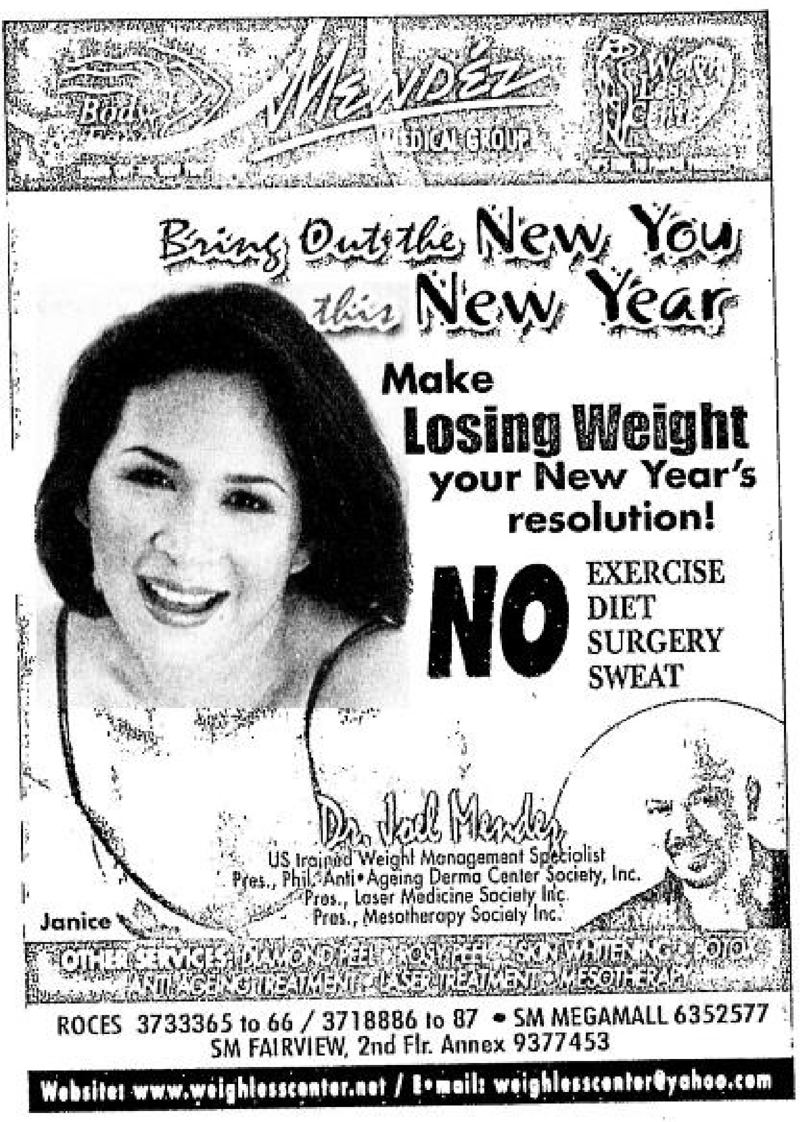

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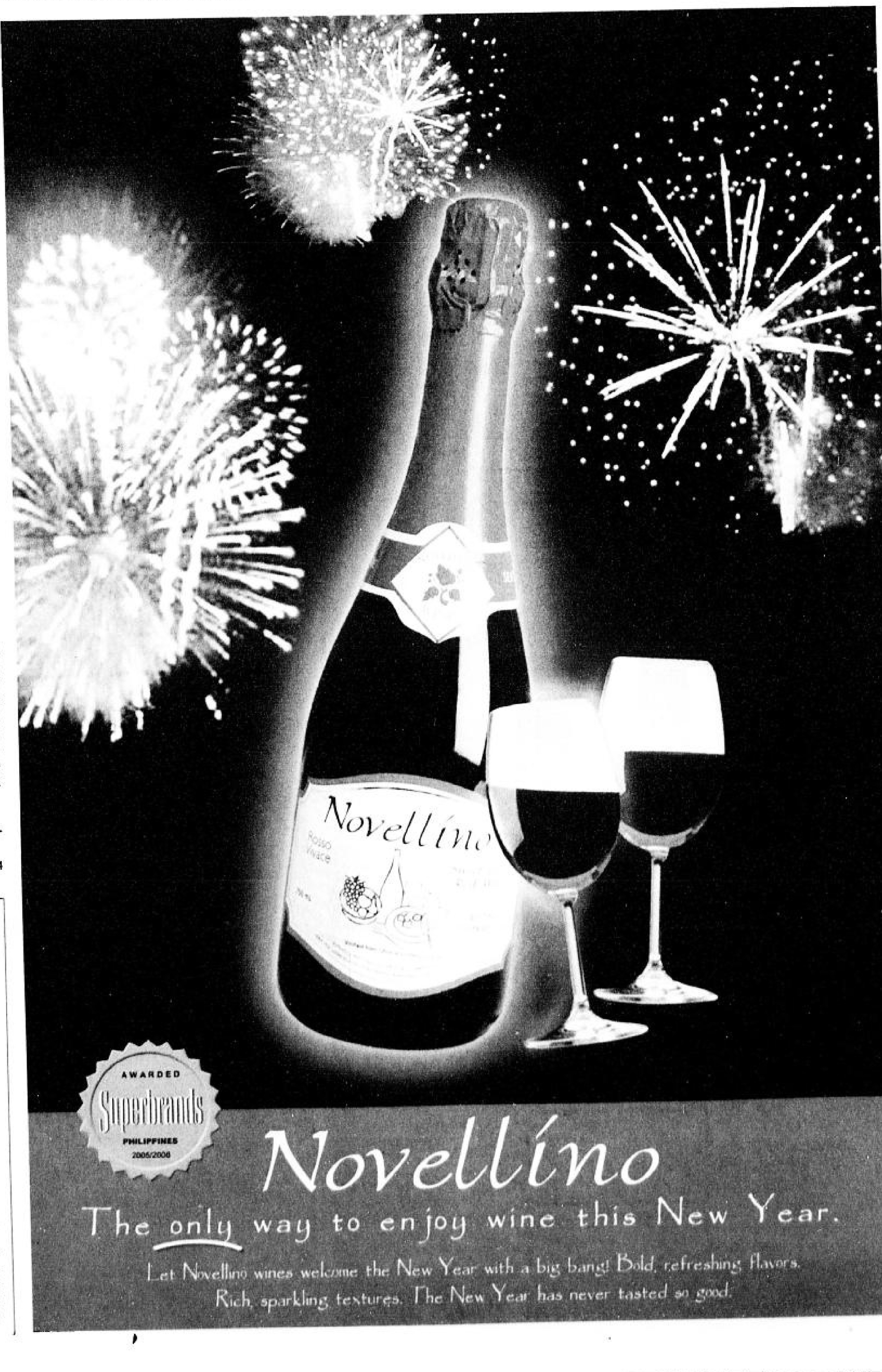

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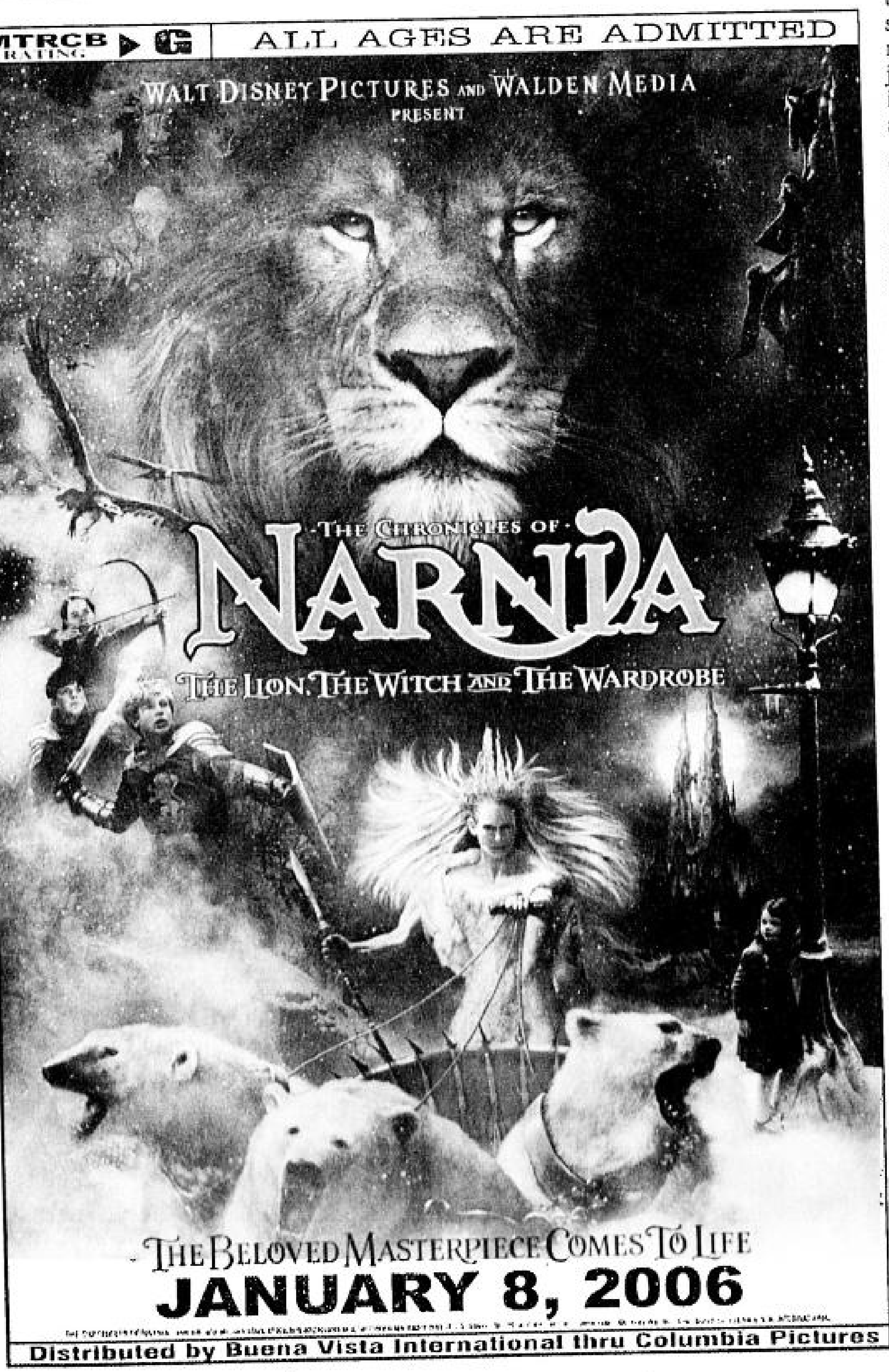
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Magic, the Vegas way, in 'Spellbound'

"SPELLBOUND," THE MAGIC SHOW AT Araneta Coliseum (until Jan. 8) is an entertaining combination of "traditional" magical tricks, modern updates, and Las Vegas verve for kids and grownups alike.

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

The Las Vegas element is contributed by leggy dancers who frame each segment of the show with high-kicking numbers that expand the entertainment context of the show beyond its rather intimate and standard acts of prestidigitation.

"Spellbound" stars the veteran duo act of **Michael Giles** and **Stacey Jones**, billed as The Majestix, whose expertise and flair hark back to traditional presentations of this nature.

Newer magic acts are represented by a relatively young magician with a less grand, more personal approach that clicks with the teens and children in the audience.

He employs audience participation gambits that enliven the proceedings, including getting "volunteers" to participate in his routines.

This gives the audience "representatives" to root for—or laugh at, as the case may be.

To make the young magician's portion even more different, he performs with all of the coliseum's house lights on. This is in marked contrast to the traditional magic acts' sections, which use a lot of dramatic lighting for greater suspense.

Interestingly, the young magician's best act requires no magic at all: *ala* Houdini, he gets out of a straitjacket through sheer skill, careful planning, determination and impressive physical plasticity.

Heroic

We like this act because it shows that the "impossible" can be achieved, not just through illusion, but also with sheer mental and physical ability and brio.

Aside from the show's magical elements, it also boasts of a "Cirque"-like act, The Human Design, which has three men of truly heroic physical prowess creating awesomely beautiful "sculptures" with their own bodies.

The act is breathtaking and beautiful, and it alone is worth the show's admission price.

Also impressive is the act of two gauchos from Argentina, who wow the crowd with their skills at drumming, wielding the Argentinian *bolezdores*, and entertaining the audience with their lively patter.

These and other acts make "Spellbound" a decidedly mixed bag of tricks, so the production can be faulted on point of disunity and lack of thematic focus. But the mix is entertaining, so the variety-show flavor really is of no great moment. Enjoy the show for what it is, and you should have a Happy New Year.

'American Idol'

ON JAN. 17, "American Idol" kicks off its fifth season on ABC-5. After producing the stellar likes of **Kelly Clarkson**, **Reuben Studdard**, **Fantasia Barrino** and **Carrie Underwood**, the US-wide search for exceptional singers is bent on discovering its latest batch of stars.

'So You Think You Can Dance'

CURRENTLY being telecast on ABC-5 (Fridays at 10 p.m.) is another talent search, this time for great dancers—thus its title, "So You Think You Can Dance."

The last time we caught the show, two Fil-Am finalists, **Melody Lacayanga** and **Ryan Conferido**, were still among the survivors. The advance word is that Ryan won't stay the course, but Melody will survive up to the final showdown—so, let's keep watching, and rooting for "our" best bet.

Feedback

From Jose Mari C. Maycacayan of Binangonan, Rizal: "You're the best television and film critic I know. Your objectivity

MAGIC/ A2-3

Magic, the Vegas way, in 'Spellbound'

From page A2-2

and superior writing style make you a winner and leader in your profession. Constructive criticism and suggestions are needed by our TV and film practitioners.

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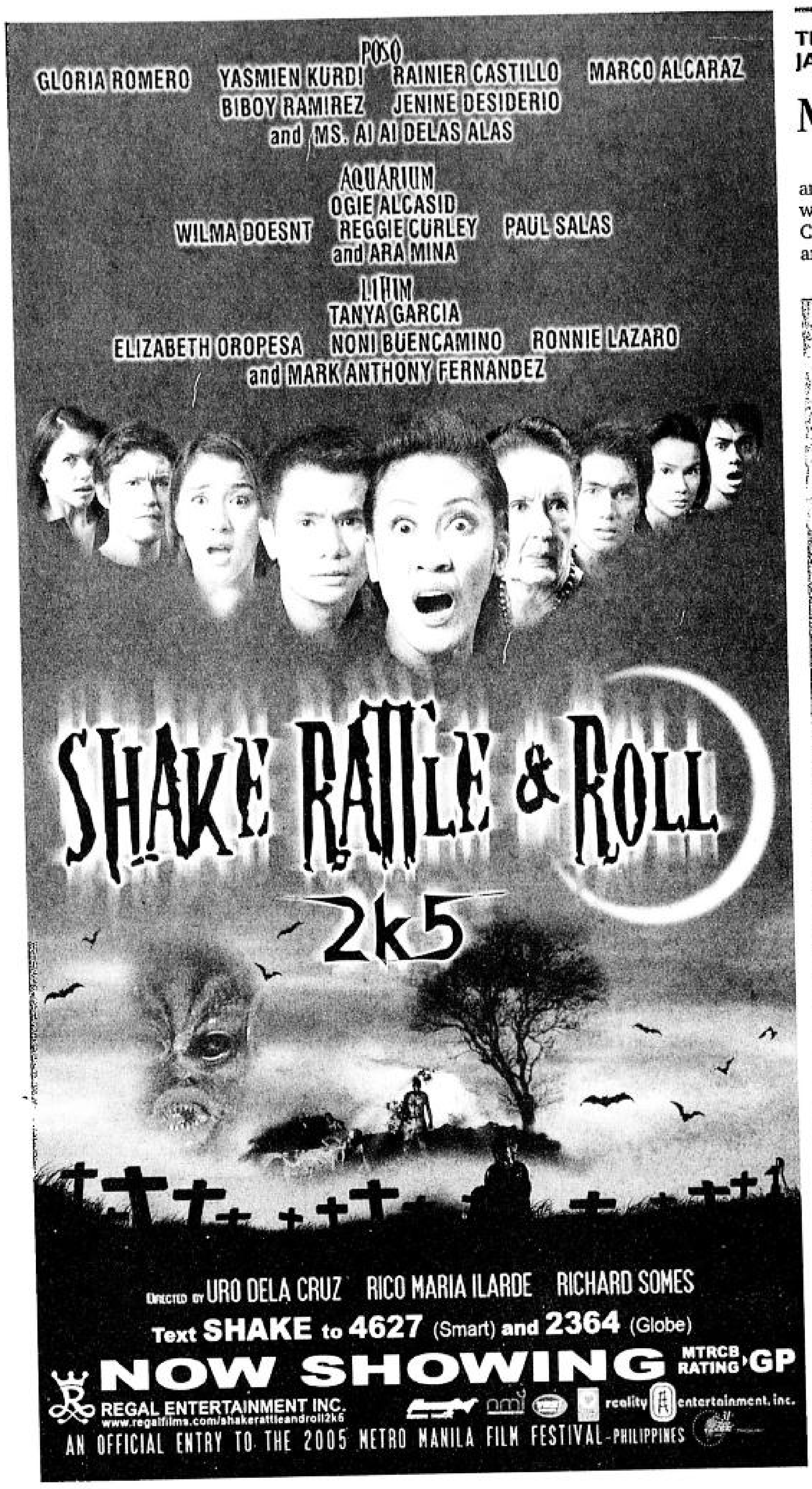
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AQUARIUM
OGIE ALCASID
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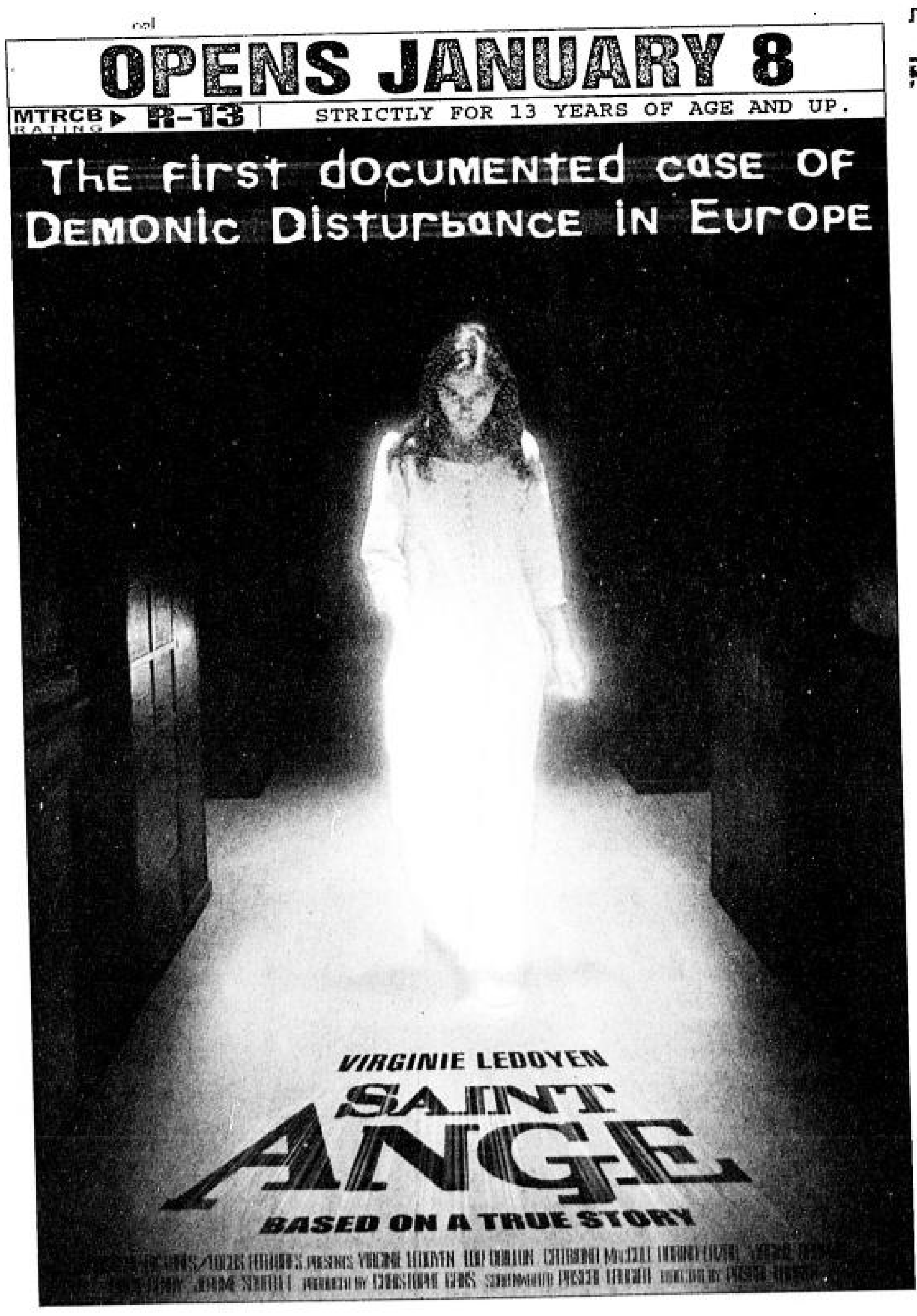
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9 BLUE MOON
10 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
11 EXODUS
12 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO

SM CITY STA. MESA
1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 EXODUS
3 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
7 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
8 MOURNING GIRLS
9 BLUE MOON
10 EXODUS

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
2 BLUE MOON
3 MULAWIN
4 EXODUS

SM VALENZUELA
1 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
2 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
3 EXODUS
4 BLUE MOON

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1 MOURNING GIRLS
2 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
3 EXODUS
4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
5 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
7 EXODUS
8 AKO LEGAL WIFE
9 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
10 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
11 BLUE MOON
12 KUTOB

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1 EXODUS
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
3 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
5 BLUE MOON
6 AKO LEGAL WIFE
7 MOURNING GIRLS
8 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
9 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
10 KUTOB

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1 BLUE MOON
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
3 EXODUS
4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
4 KUTOB
5 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
6 BLUE MOON
7 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
8 EXODUS

SM CITY MANILA
1 MOURNING GIRLS
2 EXODUS
3 KUTOB
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
5 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
6 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
7 BLUE MOON
8 AKO LEGAL WIFE
9 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
10 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
11 EXODUS
12 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO

SM SAN LAZARO
1 EXODUS
2 BLUE MOON
3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
4 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
5 AKO LEGAL WIFE
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

LUZON

SM CITY PAMPANGA
1 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
2 EXODUS
3 BLUE MOON
4 KING KONG
5 AKO LEGAL WIFE
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

SM CITY [illegible]
1 EXODUS
2 BLUE MOON
3 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

SM [illegible]
1 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
2 EXODUS
3 BLUE MOON
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

SM CITY BACOOR
1 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
2 AKO LEGAL WIFE
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
4 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
5 EXODUS
6 BLUE MOON
7 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
8 KUTOB

SM CITY [illegible]
1 EXODUS
2 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
3 BLUE MOON
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

SM CITY DASMARINAS
1 EXODUS
2 KING KONG
3 BLUE MOON
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

SM CITY LUCENA
1 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
2 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
3 BLUE MOON
4 EXODUS

SM CITY BATANGAS
1 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
2 EXODUS
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
4 BLUE MOON

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

SM [illegible]
1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 KING KONG
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
4 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
5 BLUE MOON
6 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
7 MOURNING GIRLS
8 EXODUS

SM [illegible]
1 EXODUS
2 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
3 MOURNING GIRLS
4 BLUE MOON
5 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
6 KING KONG
7 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
8 AKO LEGAL WIFE

SM CITY DAVAO
1 EXODUS
2 KING KONG
3 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
4 BLUE MOON
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
6 AKO LEGAL WIFE

SM CITY [illegible] DE ORO
1 KING KONG
2 AKO LEGAL WIFE
3 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
4 EXODUS

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'Oops, I did it again'

From page A2-1

I've not spoken to him for four months now. There's something wrong with him. One time, he sent me a text message that said, 'Good morning, Angel.' And then in the afternoon, another [message], 'You suck!' *'Di ba nakakaloka?* I don't want anything to do with him anymore. I also don't want to talk about him. *Baka naman sabihin n'ya, porke't wala s'ya dito sinisiraan ko s'ya.*

So you're still searching for Mr. Right?

I've stopped looking. *Ganito na lang muna ako.* Sometimes, I go out on dates *naman.*

You've been in the business for 15 years, is there anything else you wish for?

I'd like a new TV show and a new movie. I still have to do three for Star Cinema. I have one movie for Regal Entertainment. I'd like to work with *Ate* Vi (Vilma Santos) in a movie someday. I also wish to be paired with *Tito* Dolphy, Robin (Padilla), Aga (Muhlach), Piolo (Pascual), Mega (Sharon Cuneta) and Judy Ann (Santos).

A QUIETER AiAi at PDI JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Changes at the CEB?

From page A2-1

lin ang Pagbaba ng Araw" and "Quest Files," aired on GMA 7 in the 1990s. She also produced 51 tele-movies with Four Aces in the late '90s. In 1992, she co-produced "Andres Manambit" and "Hiram na Mukha" with Viva Films.

Another CEB source floated a different name, Bernadette Valdez, as candidate for chair. The website gives no information on Valdez.

"I expect a new chair to be appointed by Malacañang anytime soon," Atienza told INQUIRER Entertainment. "As of now, I am concurrently FDCP head and CEB chair. Yes, I've heard about [Dayrit's nomination], but I wasn't the one who recommended her. Malacañang will make the final decision."

Atienza also commented on a rumored "overhaul" of the CEB membership. "There's a limit to the number of years a member can serve, which is three years. As of now, there are eight to 10 members who cannot be reappointed on that account and will have to be replaced."

There are 28 CEB members at present.

Top contenders for MMFF awards

From page A2-1

A total of 17 male artists are vying for Best Actor, said Tieng. Marvin will compete with big favorites Dennis Trillo, Eddie Garcia and Christopher de Leon—stars of "Blue Moon."

Tieng also pointed out that, for Best Director, Reyes will have to fight it out with Lamangan ("Blue Moon") and Erik Matti, who directed Ramon "Bong" Revilla's fantasy flick, "Tales of the Enchanted Kingdom: Exodus."

Cherrie Pie Picache ("Ako Legal Wife") is a favorite for Best Supporting Actress, but so is Pauleen Luna in "Blue Moon" and Alessandra de Rossi in "Kutob," said Tieng.

He added: "*Matunog ang pangalan ni* Ryan (Agoncillo) for Best Supporting Actor (Ryan's name keeps cropping up)." But he said Ryan is headed for a "tough battle" with Trillo, if the board of jurors decides that the latter should be nominated for Best Supporting Actor.

"Dennis shows first-rate acting in 'Mulawin,'" Tieng stressed. "We have so many good actors these days, you'll be surprised."

According to Tieng, the MMFF has included box-office results as a factor in deciding which film would win Best Picture. "But it is not a dominant criterion," he added.

Tony Reyes' "Enteng Kabisote 2 Okay Ka Fairy Ko, The Legend Continues" is currently the festival top-grosser. "Exodus" is in second place, while "Mulawin," directed by Dominic Zapata and Mark Reyes, is in third.

"That's why we shouldn't be surprised if one of the three fantasy films wins one of the three Best Picture awards," Tieng said.

The Best Picture wins P750,000; Second Best Picture, P500,000; Third Best Picture, P300,000.

Another notable change in the festival rules is the increase in cash prize for winners of acting awards, said Tieng. "From last year's P50,000, the Best Actor and Actress will now get P70,000 each. This year, winners in majority of the categories, including Best Screenplay, will get cash prizes.

The Best Float winner in the "Parade of the Stars" held on Christmas Eve will receive P500,000; runner-up, P350,000, and third placer, P150,000.

Tieng said this year's board of jurors is a smaller group of nine members, compared to last year's 13. "We cannot divulge their identities at this time," he told INQUIRER Entertainment on Tuesday. "The deliberations are not yet finished."

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MULAWIN GP 12:20,2:50,5:30, 7:50,10:15
BLUE MOON GP 1:05,3:20,5:35, 7:50,10:05
AKO LEGAL WIFE: MANO PO 4 PG13 12:30,2:50,5:10, 7:30,10:00
ENTENG KABISOTE: THE LEGEND CONTINUES GP 12:50,3:10,5:30, 7:50,10:10
MORNING GIRLS R13 1:15,3:30,5:45,8:00,10:15
EXODUS: TALES FROM THE ENCHANTED KINGDOM GP 12:40,3:00,5:20,10:00

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① ENTENG KABISOTE 2 MTRCB. GP 12 20, 2 45, 5 10, 7 35, 10 00
③ AKO LEGAL WIFE MTRCB. PG-13 12.20, 2.45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00
② MULAWIN THE MOVIE MTRCB. GP 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00
④ BLUE MOON MTRCB. GP 12.05, 2.30, 4:55, 7:20, 9.45
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CINEMA 4 BLUE MOON GP 11:30, 1:45, 3:55, 6:05, 8:15, 10:25
CINEMA 5 AKO LEGAL WIFE - PG13 11:30, 1:50, 4:10, 6:30, 8:50
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EXODUS 12:30 / 2:40 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30
SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 12:30 / 2:40 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30
MULAWIN 2:10 / 4:40 / 7:10 / 9:40
ENTENG KABISOTE 2 2:05 / 4:35 / 7:05 / 9:35
KUTOB 12:30 / 2:45 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30
GLOBE PLATINUM CINEMA
AKO, LEGAL WIFE 1:30 / 4:00 / 6:30 / 9:00
AKO, LEGAL WIFE 2:10 / 4:40 / 7:10 / 9:40
BLUE MOON 12:30 / 2:40 / 5:00 / 7:20 / 9:40
MOURNING GIRLS 12:40 / 2:50 / 5:00 / 7:10 / 9:30
ALI MALL CINEMAS
❶ ENTENG KABISOTE 2 12:30 / 3:00 / 5:30 / 8:00
❷ MULAWIN 12:35 / 3:05 / 5:35 / 8:05
❸ KUTOB 12:20 R4 / 1:35 / 3:50 / 6:05 / 8:20
❹ LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO 1:00 / 3:20 / 5:40 / 8:00
❺ AKO LEGAL WIFE 12:35 / 3:05 / 5:35 / 8:05
DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS
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GALLERIA
632-9116

1 AKO LEGAL WIFE • THX
12:55 3:15 5:35 7:55 10:00

2 EXODUS
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
12:15 2:45 5:15 7:45 10:00

4 KUTOB
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

5 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

6 MULAWIN the MOVIE
12:20 2:50 5:20 7:40 10:00

7 AKO LEGAL WIFE
12:25 2:45 5:05 7:25 9:35

8 BLUE MOON
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

9 THE MOURNING GIRLS
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

10 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

ERMITA
536-7809 to 12

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
10:30 12:50 3:10 5:30 7:40 10:00

2 AKO LEGAL WIFE
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

3 MULAWIN the MOVIE
10:30 12:50 3:10 5:30 7:40 10:00

4 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

5 BLUE MOON
10:30 12:50 3:10 5:30 7:40 10:00

6 THE MOURNING GIRLS
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

7 EXODUS
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

METRO EAST
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1 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL
11:20 1:40 4:00 6:20 9:00

2 EXODUS
12:20 2:40 5:00 7:20 9:30

3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
12:10 2:30 4:50 7:10 9:20

4 MULAWIN the MOVIE
11:00 1:30 4:00 6:30 9:00

5 AKO LEGAL WIFE
10:45 1:20 3:55 6:30 9:05

6 THE MOURNING GIRLS
10:45 1:20 3:55 6:30 9:05

7 BLUE MOON
12:05 2:15 4:25 6:35 9:00

8 LAGOT KA SA KUYA MO
12:10 2:30 4:50 7:10 9:20

NOVALICHES
935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 EXODUS
2 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL
3 THE MOURNING GIRLS
4 BLUE MOON
5 MULAWIN the MOVIE
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
7 AKO LEGAL WIFE
8 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO

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1 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
2 EXODUS
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3 MULAWIN the MOVIE
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G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 AKO LEGAL WIFE	2 MULAWIN	3 THX BLUE MOON GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 MOURNING GIRLS	5 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL	6 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	7 EXODUS
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 AKO LEGAL WIFE	2 KUTOB		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX BLUE MOON GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX AKO LEGAL WIFE GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 EXODUS GUARANTEED SEATS	4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL GUARANTEED SEATS	5 MULAWIN GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX ENTENG KABISOTE 2	2 BLUE MOON		
	3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL	4 AKO LEGAL WIFE	5 MULAWIN	
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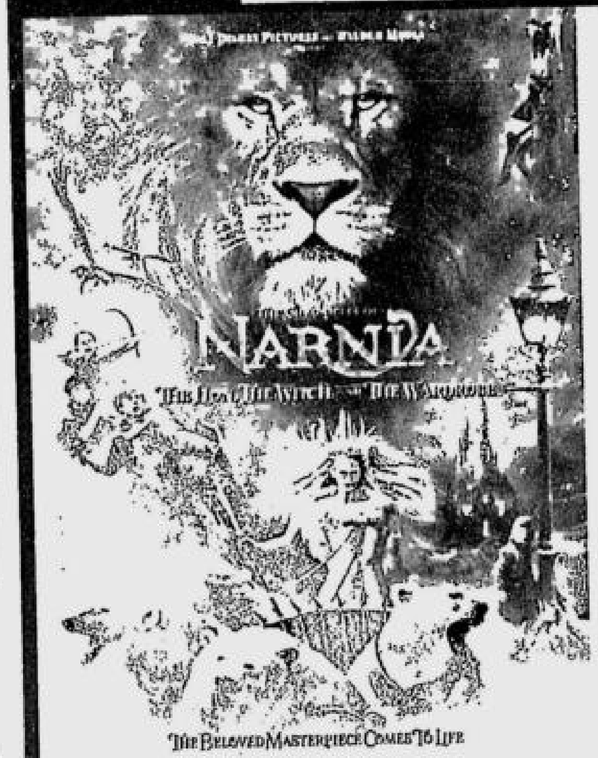

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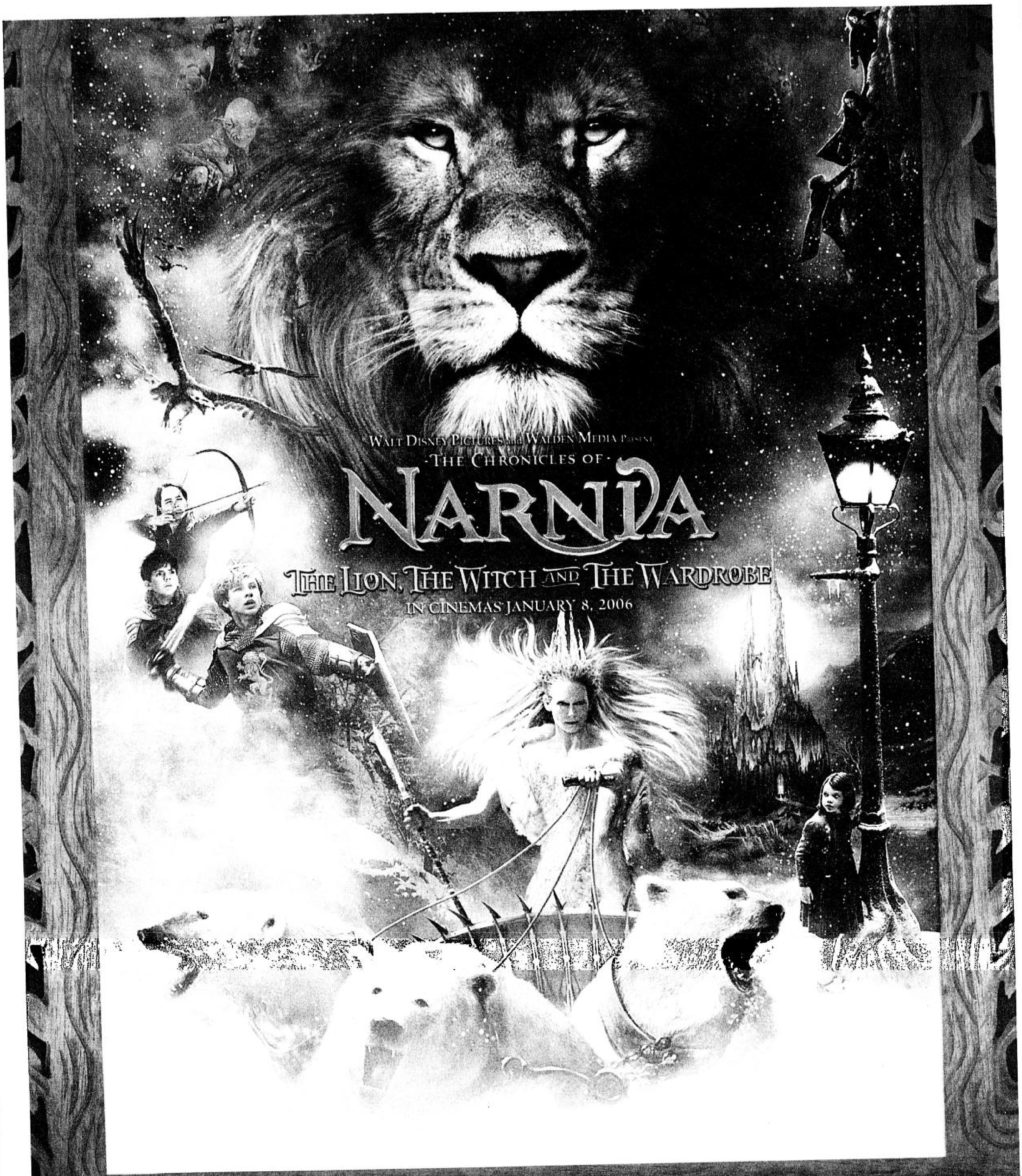

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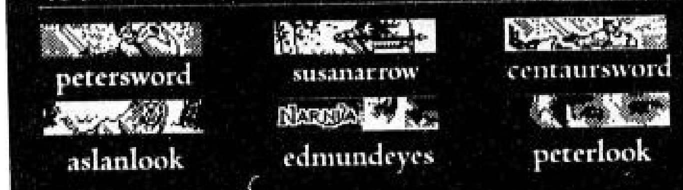

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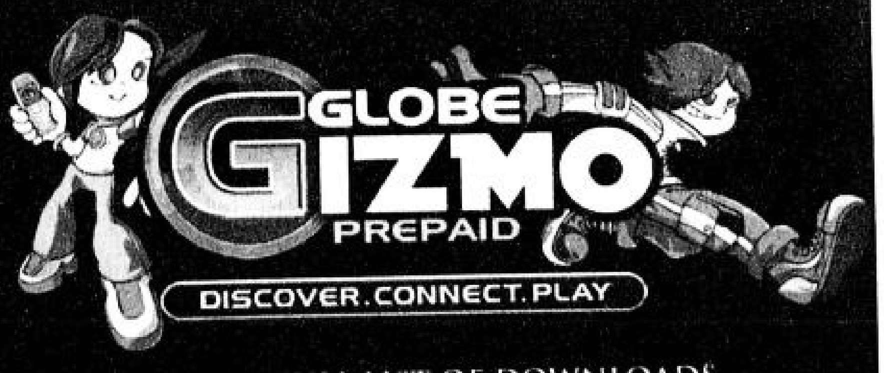

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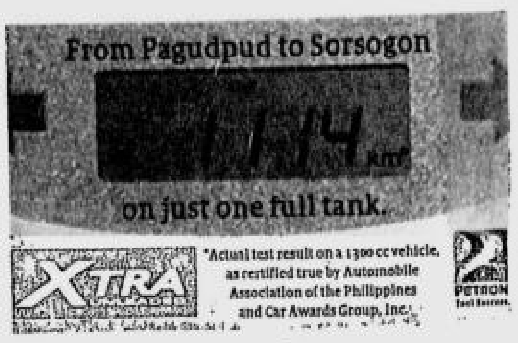
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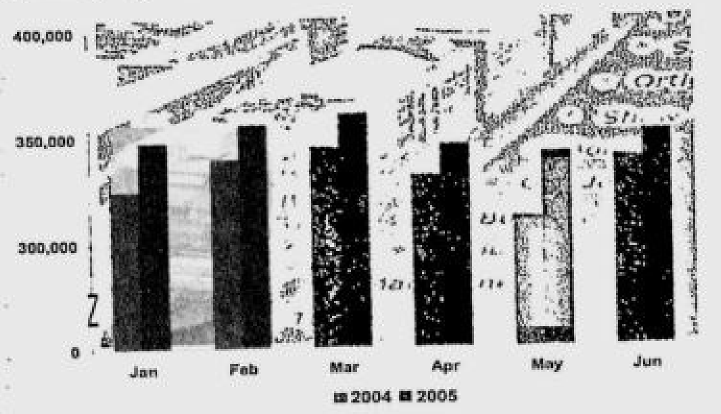
Peso poised to break into 51:$1

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Average daily MRT ridership

(January to June 2004 and 2005)



Source: Department of Transportation and Communication

AVERAGE daily ridership for Metro Rail Transit (MRT) Corp.'s Metrostar Express trains for the first six months of 2005 posted a 5.6-percent year-on-year increase from 2004. Last year, the average daily ridership from January to June stood at 331,650; this year it went up to 350,081. The MRT Line 3, nicknamed the Blue Line after the color of its trains, traverses Edsa from Taft Avenue in Pasay City to North Avenue in Quezon City.

Jamie Alarcon, PDI Research

Gains another 23.5 centavos to close at 52.425

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO RALLIED FURTHER TO 52.37 BEFORE closing at a new three-year high of 52.425 to the dollar yesterday on strong regional currency markets and rosy domestic fiscal prospects.

The local currency may even break into the 51 level once the government delivers the projected revenues from the 2-percentage increase in value-added tax (VAT) rate after February, said Jose Emmanuel Hilado, president of foreign exchange association ACI Philippines.

"The trend is toward appreciation. Of course, it can't be all the way up because sooner or later, it needs a healthy correction. But the uptrend is intact," Hilado said in an interview yesterday.

"The direction is toward 51.50-52:$1 but not too soon because the market is becoming oversold," he said.

The local currency yesterday gained another 23.5 centavos from Tuesday's closing of 52.66 against the greenback on heavy volume of $622.5 million at the Philippine Dealing System.

Hilado said next month's increase in the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent—the single fiscal reform deemed as necessary to stabilize the government's budget—would bring in more foreign investments to local stocks and securities.

But as the currency was inching closer to the 52 level, he said it would attract some corporate demand such as from those with foreign debt servicing or importation requirements.

Expected proceeds from a fresh global bond offer by the national government worth at least $1.5 billion likewise boosted sentiment on the peso, currency traders said.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said: "Continuing positive sentiment, some foreign exchange inflows, absence of significant dollar demand and weaker dollar against other currencies buoyed the peso."

During the Estrada regime, the peso traded between 46.25 and the record low of 56.45 against the dollar. As such, traders said it was possible for the peso to appreciate even toward midway those levels or at about 50-51 to $1.

The local stock market was seen to have ended a seven-year downturn in 2001 while the peso bottomed out late last year. The peso was trading at about 56.30 in September last year, improving to 55.90 in October and sharply appreciating since then.

The peso was likewise aided by the weakening of the US dollar in Asian trade on expectation that the US Federal Reserve would

PESO/B2

BETWEEN MARCH AND MAY

Gov't readies sale of RPN 9, IBC 13

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT WILL PRIvatize two state-run television stations before the end of May, the government's Privatization and Management Office (PMO) announced yesterday.

The sale of IBC-13 and RPN-9 television stations would take place separately between March and May, the PMO said in a statement, adding that it had chosen CLSA Exchange Capital Inc. as its lead adviser in the sale.

It did not say how much the government was expecting from the sale but the finance department had set a conservative target of P500 million in revenue from privatizing state assets this year.

It raised about P8.3 billion from asset sales in 2005.

CLSA bested six other firms that were included in the short list chosen by the PMO to help it privatize the media assets.

"CLSA has extensive media investment banking experience in Asia, having completed 36 media transactions worth over $3 billion," the PMO said. CLSA has likewise completed transactions for seven broadcasting companies, it added.

Privatization chief Jose A.R. Bengzon III said CLSA would provide the advisory services for the privatization of both television stations, but clarified that Channels 9 and 13 would be sold separately.

With the help of the financial adviser and the attractiveness of the state-owned assets among the private sector, the PMO said the privatization was likely to be completed between March and May this year.

He said the would-be buyers of the television stations must be Filipino-owned as the Constitution requires that media outfits should be held by Filipinos.

The government has decided to place Channels 9 and 13 in the list of state-owned assets to be privatized, having adopted the policy of giving up responsibility over companies that are deemed better run by the private sector.

The PMO and the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) have exposures in RPN 9, while the PCCG holds equity investments in IBC 13.

Fiscal authorities agreed with the privatization of the television stations, which were not profitable, also to lessen the financial burden on the government.

The government said proceeds from privatization would be used mainly to fund infrastructure projects that cannot be accommodated by an insufficient national budget.

In 2005, the government easily surpassed its goal of generating P500 million from the privatization program after it sold bulk of its shares in Philippine National Bank to the Lucio Tan group for about P2 billion.

Other government assets intended to be privatized this year are PNOC-EDC, Philippine Postal Corp., Al-Amanah Bank, and shares in San Miguel Corp. and Manila Electric Co.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Reynolds plant sold for P365M /B2

Coco oil exports up 15.8%; growth exceeds goal /B3

Court accepts CAP rehab plea /B3

PLDT reviving unlimited ₱10/call plan

By Ronnel W. Domingo

TELECOMMUNICATIONS GIANT PHILIPpine Long Distance Telephone Co. yesterday announced it was relaunching its unlimited call service on a permanent basis.

PLTD assistant vice president Gary G. Dujali said the promotion was revived upon approval of the National Telecommunications Commission and the Department of Trade and Industry.

Dujali said the promo would be back starting Jan. 7 and that subscribers could again avail themselves of lower call rates at P10 per call for national direct distance and landline-to-Smart cell phone calls.

He said the unlimited call service was estimated to have made a significant contribution in bringing PLDT a positive net income growth rate in 2005 from the P28 billion it

PLDT/B2

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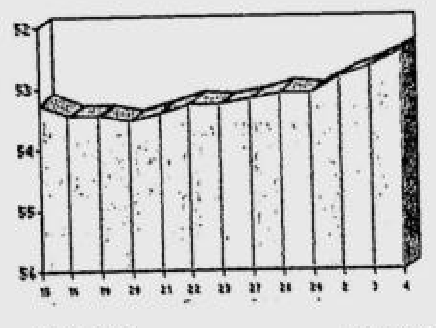

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As of 5 p.m., Jan. 4, 2006

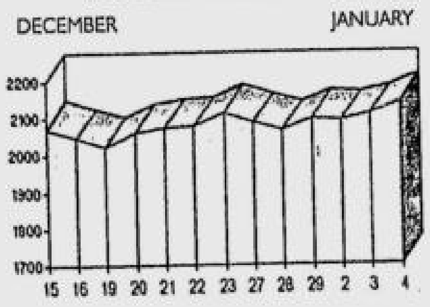
GOLD: $533.30-533.80

per ounce Hong Kong, Jan. 4, 2006

STOCK MARKET

Shares close 1.34% higher

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

SHARE PRICES closed 1.34 percent higher yesterday, supported by growing optimism on the economic outlook and the possibility Japanese telecoms giant NTT DoCoMo will invest $300 million in Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., the dominant local carrier, dealers said.

Sharp gains in the regional markets following Wall Street's strong lead overnight also helped.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index rose 28.26 points at 2,138.05 after trading between 2,109.79 and 2,144.04. Volume was 447 million shares worth P1.15 billion. The broader all-shares index rose 17.51 points to 1,011.75.

Gainers beat losers 68 to nine, with 38 stocks unchanged.

"This rise is really buoyed by investors' vote of confidence in the economy, with the strong peso as an indicator, and expectations of credit-rating upgrades for the country," said Rommel Macapagal of Westlink Global Equities.

"The general expectation is that 2006 will be a good year," said Mark Alan Canizares of Citiseconline.com.

"Investor optimism is being anchored on full implementation of the new value-added tax (VAT) law come February, which they hope will bring about a fiscally stronger national government," he added.

PLDT was the most actively traded stock, rising P35 to P1,850 following the announcement that NTT DoCoMo intends to invest $300 million into the company.

Rival Globe Telecom Inc. gained P5 to P745.

Ayala Land rose 25 centavos to P10.25 while SM Prime Holdings gained 10 centavos to P8.20. Megaworld Corp. advanced 10 centavos to P1.36.

San Miguel Corp. "A" shares, limited to local investors, ended steady at P65. San Miguel "B" shares, available to local and foreign investors, also closed unchanged at P89.50. *AFP*

BIR misses '05 goal by P15B

THE BUREAU OF INternal Revenue, which underwent a change in leadership last year, failed to meet its collection target for 2005 by P15 billion.

Preliminary documents showed that the BIR, the government's main revenue source, collected only P532 billion compared with its goal of P547 billion.

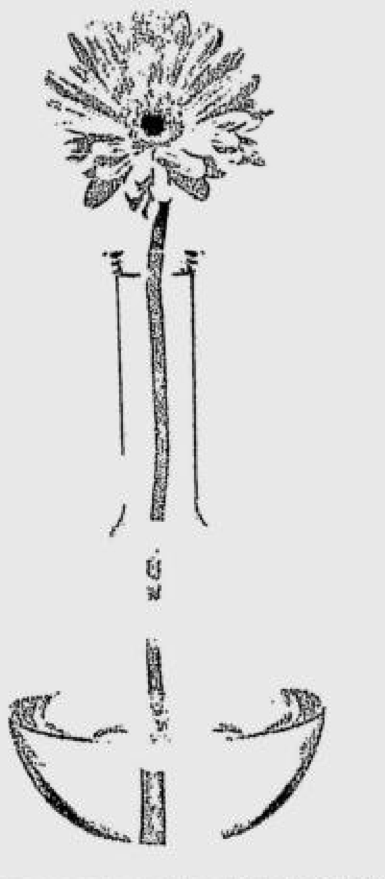
The P532-billion collection, however, still did not take into account the P6 billion worth of non-cash tax collection that the revenue agency was lobbying to be included in its collection performance for last year.

The P6 billion in non-cash tax payments were composed of documentary stamp taxes on government securities imposed on the Bureau of the Treasury.

The BIR wanted this included in its performance record, stressing that it exerted the same amount of effort in collecting tax payments, whether the payment was made in the form of cash or non-cash.

If the P6 billion would be considered in the revenue agency's 2005 collection performance, then the BIR's total tax take for last year

BIR/B2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It was over a decade ago that we, at DuPont, sharpened our focus on environmental issues. Today, we are the global leaders in greenhouse gas reduction. DuPont emissions are down globally by 72%, outdoing goals of 65% set for the year 2010. DuPont has cut energy use by 7% over the last 15 years, despite a 30% increase in goods produced. And with natural resources being depleted at a quick pace, we also aim to develop the world's first integrated corn based 'Bio-Refinery' with help from the Renewable Energy Laboratory, USA. In the Philippines, DuPont achieved significant reduction in environmental footprint through the reforestation of Mt. Makiling Forest Reserve watershed.
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Reynolds plant sold for ₱365M

Creditor banks sell aluminum facility to Shanghai-based scrap company

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE CREDITOR-BANKS OF DEFUNCT Reynolds Philippines Corp. has sold the latter's foreclosed aluminum sheet plant to a Shanghai-based aluminum scrap company for P365 million.

Banking sources said the banking consortium, which includes Land Bank of the Philippines, Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., RCBC Savings Bank and AsiaTrust Development Bank, sold RPC's building and equipment in Dasmarinas, Cavite to the Chinese firm.

The buyer, which offered to pay P365 million for the equipment, excluding the real property where the plant stands, was chosen from among four companies that submitted bids for the plant in October last year.

"Some of the equipment which are operational will be used for its operations in Shanghai, while the rest will be dismantled and will be used as scrap," one source said.

The trust group of Metrobank, which has a branch in Shanghai, is acting as trustee for the creditor-consortium.

After selling the assets, the creditor-banks will share in the proceeds from the sale.

Landbank, which has the biggest exposure to RPC, will have a 53-percent share, followed by Metrobank with 38 percent.

"We have issued already the notice of award, but we're waiting for the completion of the 10 percent deposit," the source added.

The consortium has the right to forfeit the P5-million bond submitted by the winning bidder in case the sale falls through.

Meanwhile, the consortium has also received separate offers from reputable property developers for a potential joint venture on the development of the plant site.

The property, which is near SM City in Dasmarinas, spans about 12 hectares and is valued at about P510 million.

"It was decided that the property will be held by the consortium. The members agreed that the property is valuable," a sources said. "We can sell it but if the price is not acceptable to the consortium, we could do a joint venture, but the decision has to be unanimous."

"We want to get the equipment out of the way first," the source added.

RPC was established in 1954 by Reynolds International Inc.

It manufactures and distributes aluminum sheets, foil and extruded sections used in the packaging, container, construction, appliance manufacturing and vehicle manufacturing industries.

Hike in NTT stake in PLDT not yet final, firm says

By Ronnel W. Domingo

TELECOMMUNICATIONS GIANT PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. yesterday said Japan's NTT Docomo was looking at increasing its stake in the firm but nothing has been finalized.

PLDT corporate secretary Ma. Lourdes c. Rausa-Chan did not elaborate but told the Philippine Stock Exchange that details would be disclosed once the move was firmed up.

The company issued the clarification following President Macapagal-Arroyo's announcement Tuesday that PLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan had informed her of NTT DoCoMo's plan to invest $300 million in the country's dominant carrier.

PLDT officials had neither denied nor confirmed the report.

NTT DoCoMo has a 15-percent stake in PLDT. It is in turn 63-percent owned by Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corp. of Japan.

During a broadcast of the President's television program, she said further that the investment planned to invest heavily in the Third Generation cellular phone business through its unit Smart Communications.

Earlier, the National Telecommunications Commission had granted Smart—along with three other carriers—the license to operate a 3G system as well as the radio frequency spectra that it could use.

The NTC gave the licensees 30 months to start their 3G operations, which will allow faster transmission of large data, including videos.

Megaworld named among Asia's best

PREMIER PROPERTY DEVELOPER MEGAworld Corp. has been recognized as one of the best Asian companies in Euromoney's December 2005 polls.

Megaworld ranked among the top Asian companies in a number of categories.

It was voted one of the best property players in the region, second only to SP Setia of Malaysia.

Megaworld trailed the Philippine Long Distance and Telephone Company as the top two Philippine companies with the "most convincing and coherent strategy."

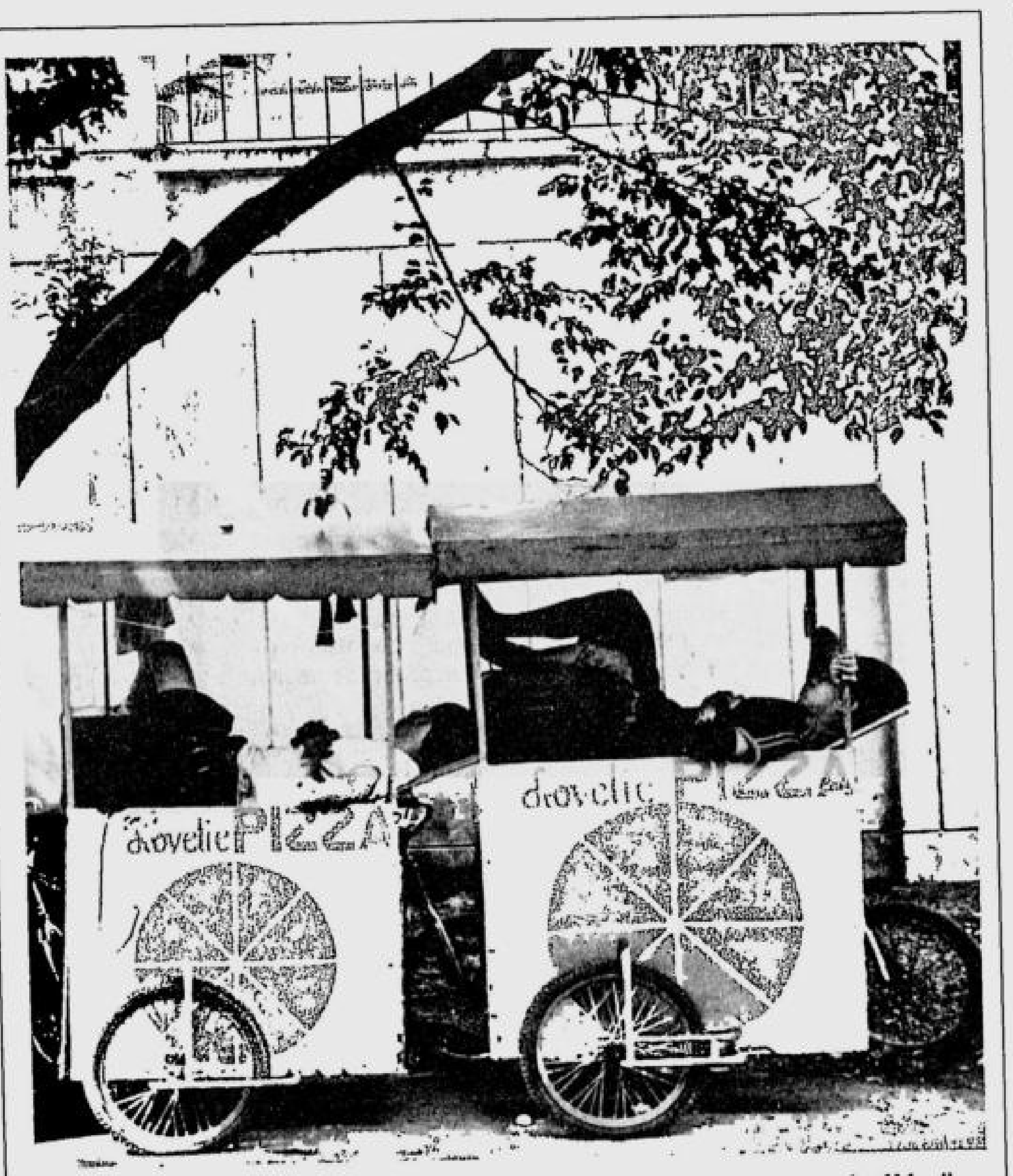
Megaworld was also named among Asia's "most improved" companies.

Other Philippine companies in the roster were Banco de Oro and ABS-CBN.

For its 10th Asia Company polls, Euromoney had market analysts at leading banks and research institutes in the region rate 368 companies from various industries in the Philippines, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand.

Megaworld's results were based on market strength, profitability, growth potential and quality of management and earnings.

Euromoney noted that the year saw Megaworld "continue its track record as a premier developer of large-scale real estate projects that cater to all needs."



PIZZA vendors take a nap on top of their cart in suburban Quezon City, north of Manila. In spite of the strength gained by the Philippine peso in the past weeks, the country still has an sluggish economy as the effect of the stronger peso will not be felt immediately. AP

Peso poised to break into 51:$1

From page B1

soon end its spate of monetary tightening as well as weak industrial output data in the world's largest economy.

Minutes from the Fed's Dec. 13 meeting showed that most Fed members believed "the number of additional firming steps required probably would not be large."

Likewise dimming prospects for the US dollar was a recent survey of US manufacturing activity whose main index in December fell to 54.2 index points from 58.1 in November.

The US dollar also lost ground against the Taiwanese dollar, Indonesian rupiah, Singapore dollar, South Korean won and Thai baht 40.875.

BIR misses '05 goal by ₱15B

From page B1

would be P538 billion, still P9 billion short of target.

Non-cash tax payments usually come in the form of Special Allotment Release Order (Saro), a document issued by a government entity to the BIR as a form of tax payment, and allows the national government to simply deduct the amount from the budget that is supposed to be allotted to that government entity.

The interagency Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC), tasked with setting economic policies and targets of the government, already issued a circular allowing the BIR and the Bureau of Customs to include non-cash payments in the computation of their tax and duty collections.

But the move is being questioned by the Bureau of the Treasury, saying it was opposed to initiatives that will make the government look like it was window-dressing its fiscal performance. National Treasurer Omar Cruz earlier said the Treasury, which releases official fiscal data, would only count revenues in the form of cash.

Former Deputy Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag was named BIR officer-in-charge in July and was formally appointed revenue commissioner in November.

Under Buñag's leadership, the BIR said it preferred the policy of encouraging voluntary tax payment rather than injecting the fear factor among delinquent taxpayers. The BIR went slow on the Run After Tax Evaders (Rate) program since his assumption of the BIR's top post.

New programs adopted by the BIR under Buñag included the Expanded Voluntary Assessment Program (Evap), which allows delinquent taxpayers to avoid tax audit as long as they voluntarily increase their tax payments by at least 20 percent. *Michelle V. Remo*

PLDT reviving unlimited ₱10/call plan

From page B1

posted in 2004.

Earlier, PLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan had said the firm's 2005 net income could hit up to P32 billion, although he made the statement when the foreign exchange rate was at about P55 to the dollar.

The peso had breached the 53-to-the-dollar level for the past two days, closing at about P52.60 on Tuesday.

Yesterday, Dujali said PLDT received "thousands" of new applications for telephone lines as well as reconnection after the company first launched the unlimited call service early last year.

The promo was later stopped following complaints from competitors that PLDT's sister company Smart Communications was being given preferential access not available to other networks.

"We are now working out with the NTC on how we can extend the service to other networks," Dujali said.

"For now, PLDT's more than 2 million subscribers can call one another through NDD as well as the 20 million Smart subscribers at only P10 per call at a minimal subscription fee of P50 a month," he added.

Dujali said the service guaranteed no cut-off time, no network congestion and no hidden charges.

He said that as a bonus, PLDT would throw in the first month subscription fee for free for those would would enlist before Jan. 31.

Also, users of Vibe—PLDT's dial-up Internet service—who would subscribe to the unlimited call service could avail themselves of a special Vibe rate of P5 an hour.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 4, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.8	50,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	34	34	34	34	589,700
Bank of the Phil. Islands	56	56	55.5	56	922,300
China Banking Corp.	620	620	610	620	10,940
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	300
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	58.5	62	58.5	60	248,300
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	32.5	33	32	32.5	552,400
Philippine National Bank	32.5	32.5	32.5	32.5	65,000
Phil. Savings Bank	35	35	35	35	26,300
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14	14	14	14	14,800
Security Bank Corp.	34	34	34	34	60,000
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Manulife Financial Corp.	3140	3140	3140	3140	1,060
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	145	145	145	145	50
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2120	2120	2120	2120	270
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	51	54	51	53	1,636,900
Manila Electric Co. A	14.25	14.75	14.25	14.75	87,000
Manila Electric Co. B	22.25	22.75	22.25	22.75	387,600
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.4	6.6	6.4	6.6	7,672,000
Petron Corp.	4.5	4.65	4.5	4.65	4,564,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.96	0.98	0.96	0.98	450,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23.75	23.75	23.75	23.75	700
Jollibee Foods Corp.	41	41	41	41	123,800
Pancake House Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	50,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.32	1.34	1.32	1.34	326,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64.5	65	64	65	74,000
San Miguel Corp. B	89.5	89.5	89.5	89.5	201,100
Universal Robina Corp.	19	19.5	18.75	19.5	4,100
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	200,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.33	3,190,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.78	0.79	0.77	0.78	1,380,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.5	4.55	4.5	4.5	2,853,000
CHEMICALS					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	10,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.0725	0.075	0.0725	0.0725	3,300,000
Panasonic Mfg Phil Corp.	7	7	7	7	1,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	1,000,000
Ayala Corp.	322.5	330	322.5	322.5	170,060
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.85	4.9	4.85	4.85	191,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.024	0.023	0.024	16,700,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.12	2.12	2.12	2.12	200,000
APC Group Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.215	0.23	460,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	10,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.86	0.86	0.86	0.86	100,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9	9	9	9	20,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.16	1.2	1.16	1.18	28,408,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.1	3.15	3.1	3.1	1,138,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	50,000
House of Investments Inc.	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	30,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.5	3.65	3.5	3.55	509,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	210,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	37,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	20,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	1,600,000
SM Investments Corp.	243	243	241	242	244,470
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	10,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	10.5	10.5	10.25	10.25	7,591,000
Belle Corp.	1.06	1.1	1.04	1.08	8,263,000
A Brown Co. Inc.	0.97	0.99	0.97	0.99	270,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	1,060,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	430,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.9	2.06	1.9	2.02	655,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.22	0.225	0.215	0.225	2,700,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.43	0.44	0.43	0.44	13,970,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	200,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	550,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.46	1.48	1.46	1.48	9,292,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.2	0.22	0.2	0.22	500,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,850,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	200,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.28	1.38	1.28	1.36	24,934,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.35	0.36	0.35	0.35	11,330,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	100,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	300,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	5,000
SM Development Corp.	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48	2,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.2	8.2	8.1	8.2	4,938,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.12	0.13	0.12	0.13	710,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	13	13	13	13	1,400
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	2,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.92	0.95	0.92	0.95	5,990,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	745	745	735	745	109,480
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.6	3.65	3.55	3.6	7,346,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1835	1850	1835	1850	153,060
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Imperial Res.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	2,000,000
Ionics, Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	18,600,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.1	1.5	1.1	1.1	72,000
Philweb Corp.	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	2,100,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74	5,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	40,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	9.6	9.7	9.6	9.6	1,333,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	1,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.42	1.48	1.42	1.46	613,000
Manila Jockey Club	2.85	2.9	2.85	2.9	109,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	1,000
Ipeople Inc.	3.2	3.2	3	3	197,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Paxys Inc.	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.2	388,000
MINING & OIL					
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.93	0.95	0.93	0.95	100,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	50,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	121,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.8	88,000
Benguet Corp. A	7.2	7.2	7.1	7.1	33,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.22	0.225	0.22	0.22	8,710,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.25	5,590,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	10,900,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	22,700,000
Omico Corp.	0.006	0.006	0.0055	0.0055	13,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.38	1.42	1.38	1.4	6,337,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.78	1.9	1.78	1.9	15,340,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	272,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.185	0.19	1,600,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.007	0.007	0.0065	0.0065	20,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.75	3.75	75,000
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(PDR)	13	13	13	13	257,000
SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES					
Cashrounds Inc.	4	5	4	5	1,369,000

DISCLOSURES

MANULIFE FINANCIAL CORP. has completed its offering of 12 million, 4.5-percent non-cumulative, Class A shares Series 3 at $25 a share, for a total of $300 million.

* * *

SAN Miguel Corp. has availed itself of and fully paid for 85,289 common shares at a par value of P5 a share, under its Long-Term Incentive Plan for Stock Options. Of these, 67,139 are Class A and 18,150 are Class B. These shares will bring the total number of listed common shares to 10.59 million.

* * *

LAST Dec. 29, **Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.**'s chairman of the board, Manuel V. Pangilinan, acquired 200 shares worth P1,825 each, bringing his beneficially owned shares (PCD account) to 2,500. On the same day, he bought 300 shares at P1,835 a share, increasing his beneficially owned shares (certificated) to 203,729. ***Compiled by Cyril L. Bonabente, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

January 4, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.832432	1.000000	52.6520
Japan	Yen	0.007170	0.008613	0.4535
United Kingdom	Pound	1.453009	1.745500	91.9041
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.107362	0.128974	6.7907
Switzerland	Franc	0.644945	0.774773	40.7933
Canada	Dollar	0.720034	0.864977	45.5428
Singapore	Dollar	0.504199	0.605694	31.8910
Australia	Dollar	0.613480	0.736974	38.8032
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.208627	2.653224	139.6976
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.221976	0.266660	14.0402
Brunei	Dollar	0.502676	0.603865	31.7947
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000086	0.000103	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.020418	0.024528	1.2914
UAE	Dirham	0.226648	0.272272	14.3357
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.201300	63.2508
ArgentinaPeso	0.274051	0.329218	17.3340	
Brazil	Real	0.356960	0.428816	22.5780
Denmark	Kroner	0.134053	0.161038	8.4790
India	Rupee	0.018532	0.022262	1.1721
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.220336	0.264690	13.9365
Mexico	New Peso	0.078324	0.094091	4.9541
New Zealand	Dollar	0.566820	0.680921	35.8519
Norway	Kroner	0.125627	0.150916	7.9460
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013932	0.016736	0.8812
South Africa	Rand	0.133832	0.160772	8.4650
Korea	Won	0.000829	0.000996	0.0524
Sweden	Kroner	0.106856	0.128366	6.7587
Syria	Pound	0.016036	0.019264	1.0143
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025539	0.030680	1.6154
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000388	0.000466	0.0245

Coco oil exports up 15.8%; growth exceeds goal

Shipments seen dropping 10% this year due to drought

THE COUNTRY'S COCONUT oil exports rose 15.8 percent in 2005, but shipments in 2006 are likely to fall by 10 percent due to a drought last year, a government official said yesterday.

The Philippines is the world's largest exporter of coconut oil.

Preliminary export figures for 2005 of 1.11 million tons were higher than the forecast of 930,000 tons set by an industry group, United Coconut Associations of the Philippines, and the government's estimate of 980,000 tons for the year.

Jesus Emmanuel Paras, administrator of the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA), said the agency was sticking to its forecast of 1 million tons of coconut oil exports this year, anticipating that production would be hit by the drought caused by the El Nino weather pattern.

"There will be at least a 10-percent reduction in (export) volume," Paras said. "The mild drought in 2005 could affect production and output." It takes a year for coconuts to mature.

Production of copra, the raw material from which coconut oil is extracted, climbed 9.88 percent in 2005 from 2004 to 2.612 million tons, data from the PCA showed.

Copra output is expected to fall 5.3 percent to 2.46 million tonnes this year.

Most of the country's coconut oil output—used in the manufacture of aviation lubricants, cosmetics, soap and margarine—is shipped to the United States and Europe. *Reuters*

!For broker's CEP, landowners, investors & developers !!
INVESTING IN REAL ESTATE SERIES
1:30-6:00 p.m., 2nd Flr, Max's Rest., Glorietta 2, Ayala Cntr., Mkti
SEMINAR DATES & TOPICS
Jan 16 INVESTING IN REAL ESTATE: OPPORTUNITIES, TECHNIQUES & WHAT YOU NEED TO LEARN BEFORE INVESTING
Jan 17 PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT W/ HLURB RULES & UPDATES
Jan 18 TAXATION ASPECTS OF REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS AND PROPERTY ASSESSMENT
Jan 19 JOINT VENTURES FOR REAL ESTATE PROJECTS
Jan 23 HOW TO START & MANAGE A SUCCESSFUL REALTY OFFICE
Jan 24 LEGAL ASPECT OF SALE, MORTGAGE & LEASE WITH CONTRACT DOCUMENTATION AND REGISTRATION
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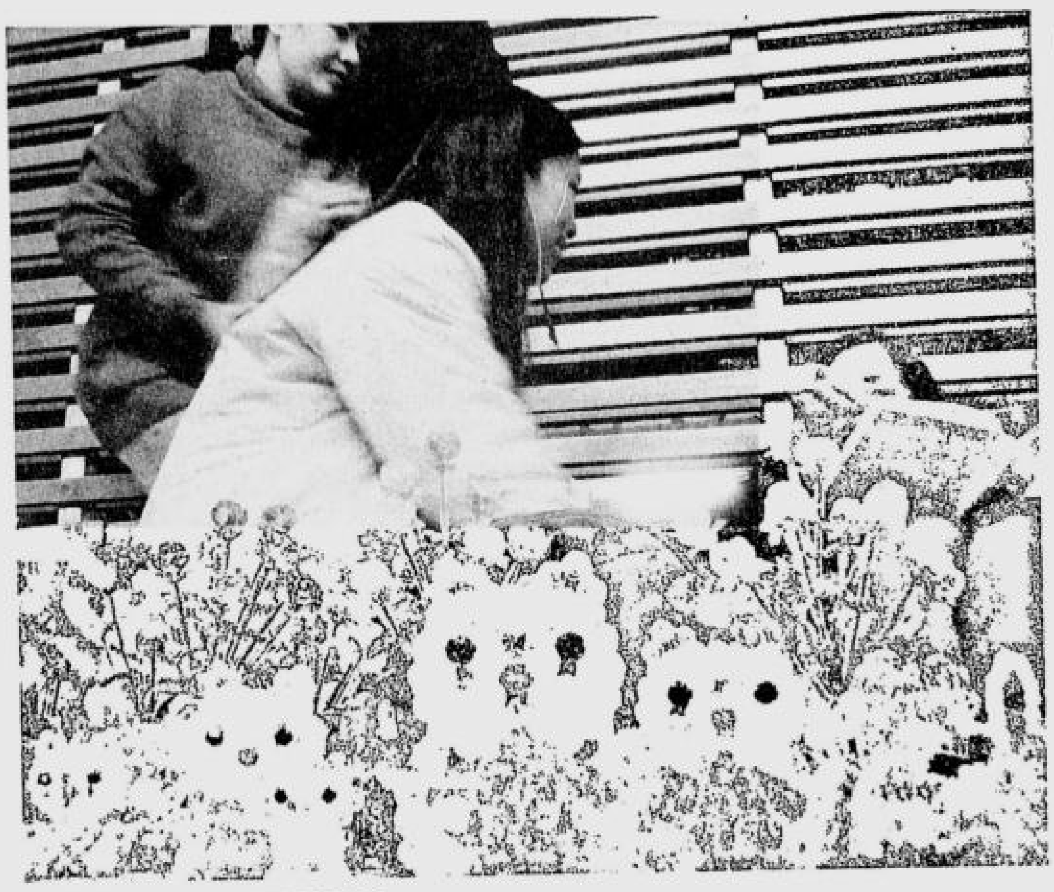

GETTING INTO BUSINESS
To raise extra money for their families back home, many Filipino domestic helpers in Hong Kong do some selling on the side. Some sell waxed decor and glass beads they, themselves, made which go for HK$ 100 to HK$ 200. Although pay is good enough compared to their old jobs back home, many of these workers make use of their spare time to earn extra to add to their remittances especially on Christmas or in time for enrollment. EV ESPIRITU

Court accepts CAP rehab plea

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE MAKATI REGIONAL TRIAL COURT HAS accepted the petition for rehabilitation of embattled education plan provider College Assurance Plan Philippines (CAP), which allowed its receiver to start auditing the company's business recovery plan.

In an order signed on Dec. 16, Makati judge Romeo Barza of Branch 61 said the court found merit in the petition and that it was "sufficient to warrant" a referral to CAP's rehabilitation receiver, Mamerto Marcelo.

The court has yet to approve the rehabilitation plan based on the receiver's recommendations.

The court, which has yet to approve the rehabilitation plan, directed CAP's receiver to evaluate the plan within 30 days from the receipt of the order.

CAP legal counsel Gilbert Reyes said the recent court decision had, in effect, junked the comments filed by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and some plan holders seeking the liquidation of the company and the distribution of its assets to concerned parties.

SEC Chair Fe Barin declined to comment on this, saying the SEC has yet to be served a copy of the trial court's order.

This development has drawn flak from lawyer Maricel Lopez who represents more than 10,000 CAP plan holders. She said she was prepared to fight at any court to uphold the welfare of CAP's plan holders.

"The current ruling of Judge Barza on the rehabilitation of CAP is not unexpected considering his earlier rulings granting the rehabilitation of Pacific Plans and Platinum Plans. We, however, welcome the early resolution of the case which gives us the opportunity to question the same in the appropriate appellate body," Lopez said in a statement.

Barza, in the meantime, said in his order that the court has given "due course" to CAP's petition, after evaluating comments filed by various parties.

Barza also said that "the interest of the plan holders cannot be dismissed without a thorough evaluation by the rehabilitation receiver of CAP's chances to be restored to a successful operation".

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Bangko Sentral issues new rules on banks' securities holdings

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS revised the formula used in computing capital charges on banks' holdings of securities marked as "available for sale (AFS)" as well as investments in reverse repurchase transactions (repos).

The change in the computation of capital charges on banks' market risk exposure aligned the BSP's capital guidelines to the newly adopted Philippine Accounting Standards No. 39, which considers only financial assets booked under the "held for trading" (HTM) category as "trading book" items.

Previously, all financial instruments that are marked to market or booked based on market values were included in the "trading book" of a bank and were subjected to market risk charge.

With the new ruling of the Monetary Board, AFS and repos will be treated as part of the "banking book" subject to capital charge for credit risk.

A repo agreement refers to the purchase of securities with the agreement to sell them at a higher price at a specific future date.

Under the Philippines' risk-based capital adequacy framework, which was patterned after Basle 1 standards, all bank assets are subject to a capital charge assessed according to whether these are "banking book" or "trading book" assets.

"Banking book" assets are subject to a capital charge for credit risk only while "trading book" assets are subject to a market risk charge.

The booking of structured products—securities with embedded derivatives or sophisticated instruments whose values are based on underlying goods or indices—was likewise revised in line with the new accounting standards.

These products can now be classified under any of the following "banking book" categories: designated at fair value through profit or loss (DFVPL), available for sale (AFS), held to maturity (HTM) and unquoted debt securities classified as loans.

Under the BSP rules, financial institutions are required to classify their outstanding investments in debt and equity securities based on their intention for holding or purchasing the securities.

Securities intended to be held until maturity fall under the HTM category, replacing the investment in bonds and other debt instruments (Ibodi) account.

The trading account securities (TAS) account—which consists of debt and equity securities purchased and held principally with the intention of selling or repurchasing them in the near term—was renamed held-for-trading securities (HFT).

The new rules make it more difficult for banks to shuffle the securities from one account to another, as a "tainting" provision on HTM was introduced.

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Investments in housing programs sustained

THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION'S efforts to accelerate the country's housing program continues to enjoy the support of private sector financiers, said Home Guaranty Corp. (HGC) president Gonzalo Benjamin Bongolan.

Bongolan said the government managed to sustain the entry into the program of an average of P17 billion in new guarantee enrollments yearly since 2001.

These investments reached an all-time high of P20.7 billion in 2003 and had remained at about the same level in the past two years, he said.

Also, about 61 percent of the universal banks operating in the country are now actively backing the housing program, he added.

Bongolan said the sustained growth of private sector investments was triggered by an earlier move by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to restore the confidence of financial institutions in the government's capability to guarantee these investments.

Private sector confidence in the government's housing initiatives was at an ebb when Arroyo took over in 2001, Bongolan said. At that time, HGC was saddled with some P16.0 billion in unpaid guarantee-related obligations arising from massive defaults in housing loans and investments.

Bongolan said HGC was directed by Arroyo to "undertake efforts to settle these guarantee calls and raise fresh capital," as the government's capability to continue mobilizing private sector funding for individual and mass housing rests on HGC's ability to ensure that guaranty calls are responded to efficiently.

The successful issuance of HGC zero-coupon bonds was the signal of a turn around in investor confidence. Bongolan said the first issuance fetched some P4.28 billion which was used to settle guarantee calls. This was an important signal that the Arroyo government has the ability to meet its obligations to private sector participants in the housing program, he added.

Bongolan said the HGC had settled all private sector obligations under the agency's retail and individual housing and development guaranty programs. The remaining unpaid guarantee obligations are owed entirely to government financial institutions and government-owned and controlled corporations.

BAGUIO WATER DISTRICT
"WE SERVE"

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Baguio Water District, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of Contract: *Installation of the remaining piping works for the rehabilitation and expansion of the Baguio Water System (Aus-AID Project)*
Location: *Baguio City*
Brief Description: *The remaining piping works to be undertaken involves the installation of pipelines (50mm-400mm diameter), 14,952 LM, Gate valves, 38 units; Blow-off valve assemblies, 19 units, Air release valves, 7 units; Road pavement restoration works, 2,627 cu.m.; Pressure reducing valve assemblies, 55 units; Service taps, 1,083 units at various sub-systems of the Baguio Water District namely subsystems 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16.*

Approved Budget for the Sub-systems (ABC)

Sub-system 4	P3,171,381.54	Sub-system 11	P7,122,484.70
Sub-system 7	P3,443,776.34	Sub-system 13	P7,088,218.08
Sub-system 8	P3,147,200.77	Sub-system 14	P3,911,091.48
Sub-system 10	P4,768,085.12	Sub-system 16	P7,096,870.85

Note: to be awarded individually or per-sub-system

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All participants relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR)

The schedule of BAC is as follows:

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	January 19-25, 2006
2. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements by the BAC	February 23, 2006
3. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	March 11-17, 2006

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at the Baguio Water District, Purok BWD, 003 Bgy. Marcoville, Baguio City, upon their submission of a LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of Two Thousand Pesos (P2,000.00) to the Baguio Water District Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said dates. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for this particular bidding.

The Baguio Water District assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

The Baguio Water District reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract as provided for under pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184.

(Sgd.) Engr. SALVADOR M. ROYECA
BAC – Projects Chairman

BWD Compound, Utility Road, Baguio City 2600, Philippines
Telephones 442-0530, 442-4228, 442-4020, 442-6403, Fax No 442-3450

(PDI Dec 29 2005 & Jan 5 2006)

DAVAO CITY WATER DISTRICT
J.P. Laurel Ave., Davao City
Tel. #221-9400

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

1. The *Davao City Water District*, with the *Approved Budget for 2005* intends to apply the sum of ***Thirteen Million Seven Hundred Twenty Seven Thousand Thirteen Pesos and Sixty Seven Cents (P13,727,013.67)*** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for ***Softstarters, Electrical Facilities and Controls, Submersible Rewindable Motor and Vertical Multi-Stage In-line Centrifugal Pump, Electric Actuators, Chain Wrenches (Chain Tong), Compact Chlorinator Cabinet, Wall Mounted Chlorine Dioxide Generator System and Chlorine Regulator, Various Computer Hardwares & Softwares, Portable Pressure Recorder & Chart Paper Disc, Leak Detector and Full Cartridge Mechanical Seal.*** Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

2. The *Davao City Water District* now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the following:

PACKAGE	DESCRIPTION	ABC
1	4 units – Softstarters (50HP, 100HP, 200HP & 250HP)	P 1,175,000.00
2	3 sets – Electrical Facilities & Controls (PW #5-100 HP, PW # VES 21, 250 HP & PW #2 – 250 HP	P 1,588,413.67
3	3 units – Submersible Rewindable Motors (100HP, 125HP & 200 HP). 1 unit – 1 HP Vertical Multi-Stage In-Line Centrifugal Pump	P 1,852,000.00
4	6 units – Electrical Actuators	P 750,000.00
5	4 units – Heavy Duty Chain Wrenches (Chain Tong)	P 500,000.00
6	1 unit – Compact Chlorinator Cabinet; 3 units – Wall Mounted Chlorine Dioxide Generator System 2 sets – Chlorine regulator	P 1,650,000.00
7	1 set – Network Attached Storage and Software	P 600,000.00
8	1 set – Computer Network Firewall appliance	P 440,000.00
9	12 pcs – Drawing Software, Power draft 4 pcs – Corel Draw	P 560,000.00
10	2 sets – Computer Aided Design and Drafting Software 1 set – Water Distribution Modeling & Management Software	P 1,900,000.00
11	2 units – Portable Pressure Recorder with 4 pcs Cartridge pen and 10 boxes Chart Paper Disc	P 321,600.00
12	1 set – Leak Detecting Equipment consisting of Multi-point correlator and electronic ground microphone	P 2,000,000.00
13	6 pcs – Full Cartridge Mechanical Seal	P 390,000.00

Delivery of the GOODS is required by ***MAY 8, 2006***. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from *Davao City Water District* and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m up to 5:00 p.m.

5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of ***P1,500.00/package***. The method of payment will be on Cash Basis. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

6. The *Davao City Water District* will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on ***JANUARY 19, 2006 at 9:00 o'clock A.M.*** at ***DCWD BAC-A Secretariat Office, J.P. Laurel Ave., Bajada, Davao City.***

7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before the ***bidding scheduled time and date at 9:00 o'clock A.M.*** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of cash or *Manager's* check and in the amount of ***P11,750.00 for PACKAGE 1, P15,884.13 for PACKAGE 2, P18,520.00 for PACKAGE 3, P7,500.00 for PACKAGE 4, P5,000.00 for PACKAGE 5, P16,500.00 for PACKAGE 6, P6,000.00 for PACKAGE 7, P4,400.00 for PACKAGE 8, P5,600.00 for PACKAGE 9, P19,000.00 for PACKAGE 10, P3,216.00 for PACKAGE 11, P20,000.00 for PACKAGE 12 and P3,900.00 for PACKAGE 13.*** Late Bids shall not be accepted.

8. Bid opening shall be at ***9:00 o'clock A.M. at DCWD BAC-A Secretariat Office, J.P. Laurel Ave., Bajada, Davao City*** on the following schedule

PACKAGE No.	BIDDING SCHEDULE, TIME & DATE
1	February 1, 2006 (9.00 A.M.)
2	February 1, 2006 (2.00 P.M.)
3	February 2, 2006 (9.00 A.M.)
4 AND 5	February 2, 2006 (2.00 P.M.)
6	February 3, 2006 (9.00 A.M.)
7, 8 AND 9	February 3, 2006 (2.00 P.M.)
10	February 6, 2006 (9.00 A.M.)
11	February 6, 2006 (2.00 P.M.)
12	February 7, 2006 (9.00 A.M.)
13	February 7, 2006 (2.00 P.M.)

Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

9. The *Davao City Water District* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Davao City Water District
BAC-A
J.P. Laurel Ave., Bajada, Davao City
Tel. No. 221-9400 (8000)
E-mail add dcwd@davao-water.gov.ph
Fax No. 224-5392
Website www.davao-water.gov.ph

(Sgd.) VIRGINIA S. MARIMON
BAC-A Chairperson

(PDI-Dec 29, 2005 & Jan 5, 2006)

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Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid for the Janitorial, Messengerial & Other Manpower Requirements of PEZA

1. The Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA), through its Corporate Operating Budget for CY 2006 intends to apply the sum of PhP 6,136,680.28 being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Janitorial, Messengerial and Other Manpower Requirements of PEZA. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The PEZA now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the Janitorial, Messengerial and Other Manpower Requirements of PEZA. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last three (3) years with an amount of at least 50% of the ABC. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested bidders may obtain further information from the PEZA and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below during office hours, Mondays to Fridays.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from 06 to 13 January 2006, Mondays to Fridays, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of PhP2,500.00 and submission of a certified copy of their G-EPS Certificate of Registration. The method of payment will be cash basis only. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The PEZA will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on 17 January 2006, 2:00 p.m. at the 6th Floor, Social Hall, Almeda Building III, Roxas Boulevard corner San Luis St., Pasay City.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before 11:00 a.m. of 31 January 2006. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of GSIS Surety Bond in the amount of not less than 2.5% of the ABC or in the form of cash, certified check cashier's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit in the amount of not less than 1% of the ABC. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be on 31 January 2006, 2:00 p.m. at the 6th Floor Social Hall, Almeda Bldg. III Roxas Blvd. corner San Luis St., Pasay City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders representatives who choose to attend.
9. In case any of the above dates is declared a special non-working holiday, it will automatically be reset on the next working day.
10. The PEZA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Philippine Economic Zone Authority
Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat
3/F Almeda Building III Roxas Boulevard corner San Luis St., Pasay City
Tel. No. 891-6444 / Telefax No 551-9587
E-mail: pezn_bac_secretariat@yahoo.com
Website: www.peza.gov.ph

THE CHAIRMAN
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - Jan. 5 & 11, 2006)

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1% w/out taking car 7262780

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1.5% Easy Car Loan 3748765

1.5% Easy Car Loan 3748765

1.5% easy carloan 7815352/55

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1.5% w/oTaking Car 3650974/75

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2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

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PUBLIC NOTICES

AUCTION SALE

MARA PAWNSHOP BR of 2230 M. Roxas St. Sta Ana Manila Auction Sale on Jan 14, 2006, Sat. at 2:30 in the afternoon Respectively, Aug. 13-Sep. 14 2005 SONS of J LANUZA Auctioneer (PDI - January 05, 2006)

MARA PAWNSHOP
I, II, III, IV and Comembo Br. of Makati City. AUCTION SALE on JAN. 14, 2005, Sat. at 10:30, 11:00, 12:30, and 1:30 and 8:30 in the morning and on the afternoon, Respectively Aug. 13 - Sep. 14, 2005.
Sons of J. Lanuza, Auctioneer (PDI - January 05, 2006)

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late CELESTINA JIMENEZ CAPELLAN was extrajudicially settled by her heirs before Notary Public Atty. Jimmy D. Lacebal of Mandaluyong City, per Doc. No. 464, Page No. 94, Book No. XXIV, Series of 2005 (PDI- Jan. 05, 12 & 19, 2006)

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jessy@mail.irnet.net.ph or qdydistribution.com.ph

National Power Corporation

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Republic of the Philippines

NPC, PSD 2006-01

VARIOUS EQUIPMENT, SPARE PARTS, WORK ORDERS INTENDED FOR NPC MAJOR POWER PLANTS

1. The NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION, through its approved Corporate Budget of CY 2005 intends to apply the sum of (see schedule under 9) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract as listed below. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected/disqualified at Bid opening.
2. The NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for GOODS as listed below. Delivery of the GOODS are required by the date indicated in the bid documents. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, Instruction to Bidders (ITB).
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184); otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act", and is restricted to Filipino Citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights to privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to post qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who shall determine as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM, Monday to Friday. However, issuance of Bidding Documents shall start on January 5, 2006 from 8:30 AM to 11:30 AM, Monday to Friday. No Bid Documents will be issued on the date of bidding.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount as listed below. The method of payment will be cash. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on the dates as listed below at National Power Corporation's available function rooms.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before the dates as listed below. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of cash, certified check, cashier's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit equivalent to one percent (1%) of the ABC; Bank guarantee equivalent to one and a half percent (1.5%) of the ABC; Surety bond equivalent to two and a half percent (2.5%) of the ABC; Foreign guarantee equivalent to one hundred percent (100%) of the ABC, or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be on the dates as listed below at National Power Corporation's available function rooms. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
9. ITEMS FOR BID

SCHEDULE NUMBER	PR NUMBER	ITEM DESCRIPTION	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT	BID DOCS. PRICE
DATE OF RE-BIDDING / BIDDING : JANUARY 20, 2006; 2:00 PM				
1A1	OWIT-05-096 (EA)	CME-DIESEL 1% BLEND OF COCONUT METHYL ESTER & 99% DIESEL FUEL (BICOCO-BIODIESEL) (PB2)	P 6,660,000.00	P 3,000.00
1A2	OWIT-05-097 (EA)	FUEL UNLEADED GASOLINE FOR HIGH COMPRESSION ENGINE (PB2)	P 5,600,000.00	P 3,000.00
1A3	OIRD-05-025 (ZC)	VARIOUS MEDICAL AND DENTAL SUPPLIES	P 2,109,850.00	P 2,000.00
1A4	1ANG-05-332 (ZC)	OIL TRANSFORMER, 200 LITER/DRUM	P 2,547,435.00	P 2,000.00

NOTE : A Pre-Bidding Conference will be held at any available NPC Function Room on January 9, 2006 at 9:00 A.M.

10. The NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
PROCUREMENT SERVICES DIVISION
MATERIALS MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT
Agham Rd., cor. Quezon Avenue
Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No. +632 921 2818
rccardeno@napocor.gov.ph
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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate; ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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FUNERARIA FILIPINAS
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LOYOLA MEMORIAL CHAPELS
EDSA cor. Bernardino St., Guadalupe, Makati City; Tels. 895-1011 to 19
MALABED FUNERAL SERVICE
3-A Coronado St., Guadalupe Viejo, Makati City; Tel. 890-63-18
SANTUARIO DE SAN ANTONIO PARISH
Forbes Park, Makati City, Tel. Nos. 843-8838/30; Fax No. 843-9223
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Magallanes Village, Makati City; Tels. 852-8228; 852-7284

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Jesus says "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." John 14:6

Our Dearly
Beloved **MAMAPO**

Gloria Albay Maranan

peacefully joined our Creator on January 2, 2006 at the age of 77.

Her bereaved family, husband **Engr. Ismael Maranan**; her children and in-laws: **AI-AI & Boying, JOY & Eric, MOMEN & Gerry, EPOY & Ennie, Fr. ALOY, O.S.B., RIC & Grace and WIWI & Jener**; her grandchildren **Princess & Edward** (†); **Aileen, Ericson, Anna & Jonn**; **Von, Noel & Jerome; E-Z Boy; Trina & Czarie;** and **Je-ann** and her great grandson **Gelo**. nieces, nephews, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Maranan's Residence in Concepcion, Alitagtag, Batangas.

Interment will be on Saturday, January 7, 2006 at Alitagtag Cemetery after 9:30 am Mass to be held in La Invencion dela Sta. Cruz Church, Alitagtag, Batangas.

"For God
so loved the
world, that
He gave His
only begotten
Son, that
whoever
believes in
Him shall
not perish but
have
everlasting
life."
John 3:16

In Loving Memory

of the **First Death Anniversary** of

Virgilio V. Verzo

who peacefully joined our Lord on January 5, 2005.

Masses will be offered on January 5, 2006 as follows:

Parish of St. Jerome Emiliani .... 6:00 am
(Alabang, Muntinlupa)
Parish of St. James the Great .... 6:20 am
(Ayala Alabang Village)
Alabang Country Club (Ayala Alabang Village) .... 6:30 pm
Marcelo Green Village (Parañaque) .... 6:45 am
Mary the Queen Parish (Ortigas, Greenhills, SJ) ..... 7:00 pm

His family, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

WE DESIGN OBITUARY FOR FREE.

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INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND BID

1. The **PHILIPPINE RECLAMATION AUTHORITY** (formerly Public Estates Authority) is inviting all interested parties to prequalify and bid for the lease of twelve (12) pre-selected sites for outdoor billboard advertising along the landstrip of Coastal Road from Barangay Tambo, Parañaque to Barangay Ilaya, Las Piñas City.
2. Qualified Bidders
   a. Any Filipino citizen, of legal age, and
   b. Any partnership, association or corporation, public or private of which at least 70% of the capital stock or of any interest in said capital stock belongs wholly to citizens of the Philippines and which is organized and constituted under the laws of the Philippines.
3. Interested qualified parties may obtain the Terms of Reference and Bid Documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of THREE THOUSAND PESOS (P3,000.00) in cash or Manager's/Cashier's check starting **December 22, 2005** until **January 24, 2006** from **9:00 AM to 5:00 PM** at the Marketing Department, 7th Floor Legaspi Towers 200, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City.
4. The first pre-bid conference is scheduled on **January 18, 2006** at **2:00 PM** at the PRA Conference Room, 8th Floor, Legaspi Towers 200, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City.
5. Required pre-qualification documents and duly accomplished Bid Documents prescribed in the Terms of Reference shall be submitted to the PRA Real Estates Bids and Awards Committee (PREBAC) on **January 25, 2006** on or before **1:00 PM**. Public opening of bids shall follow at **1:30 PM** of the same day.
6. For further information, inquiries may be made to the Marketing Department in the above address at telephone numbers 817-4711 to 13 (trunk line) and 813-7104 (direct line)

(Sgd.) **TEODORICO C. TAGUINOD**
General Manager/CEO

(PDI–Dec. 16, 19, 28, 2005; Jan. 5, 10 & 16, 2006)

PRIVATIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OFFICE

INVITATION TO SUBMIT OFFERS

Offered for Sale are seven residential lots formerly belonging to the Peninsula Development Bank (Penbank), whereby six lots are located at Peninsula Homes, Subdivision, Barangay Bukal, Pagbilao, Quezon; and one lot is located at San Vicente, Gumaca, Quezon.

These seven residential lots are being offered on a per site and on an "as-is, where-is" basis, as follows:

Peninsula Homes Subdivision, Barangay Bukal, Pagbilao, Quezon

SITE NO.	TCT NO.	LOT NO.	AREA (sq.m.)	INDICATIVE PRICE
1	T-390084	Lot-8	120	54,000
2	T-390103	Lot-6, Blk. 6	230	150,000
3	T-390089	Lot-7, Blk. 6	204	133,000
4	T-390051	Lot-6	89	67,000
5	T-390061	Lot-12, Blk. 6	227	148,000
6	T-390078	Lot-1	117	47,000

San Vicente, Gumaca, Quezon

SITE NO.	TCT NO.	LOT NO.	AREA (sq.m.)	INDICATIVE PRICE
7*	T-411949	Lot-9239	348	49,000

*With informal dwellers

Offers will be received, opened and tabulated in the presence of offerors on 17 January 2006, 6th Floor, PMO Conference Room, NDMC Building, 104 Gamboa Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City.

Interested parties may request for the duly authenticated copies of the Offer for Sale documents for a nominal fee of P300.00 from the PMO Marketing Office, 104 Gamboa Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City.

For more information, please call Mr. John DF. Baldemor of the PMO Marketing Department at 817-6331 or 817-8762.

(PDI–Jan. 3, 4 & 5, 2006)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

Maynila, Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for hte hereunder project:

Name of Project/Brief Description :	Supply, delivery and installation of 185 units Workstation/Desktop per BSP specifications and scope of work
Approved Budget for the Contract :	P14,495,000.00
Delivery Period :	Within forty-five (45) calendar days after receipt of the approved contract

Prospective bidders should have undertaken a similar project within the last five (5) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	*Schedule*
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	28 Dec. 2005 - 19 Jan. 2006, up to 2:00 PM only
2. Pre-bid Conference	20 January 2006, 4:00 PM
3. Opening of Bids	07 February 2006, 2:00 PM
4. Bid Evaluation	) These shall be in accordance with the prescribed
5. Post-qualification	) periods allowed in the Implementing Rules &
6. Notice of Award	) Regulations (IRR)-A of R.A. No. 9184 dated) 10 January 2003

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non refundable amount of P7,250.00 to the BSP Cashier.

The BSP assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.**
Chairman

(PDI - Jan 5, 2006)

People, Events & Products

E-mail: pr_pep@inquirer.com.ph
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Aries Espinosa

Pagcor chief receives CEO Excel Award

PHILIPPINE AMUSEMENT AND GAMING Corp (Pagcor) Chair and CEO Efraim C. Genuino was recently cited by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), Philippines for his outstanding leadership qualities and exemplary communication capabilities.

Chair Genuino received a Communications Excellence in Organizations or CEO Excel Award from the IABC in the "Government Executive Agencies, GOCC's and LGU's" category last Dec. 6, during the awards night held at the Hotel Intercontinental in Makati City. The winners in other categories were Finance Secretary Gary Teves, Ayala Land CEO Jaime Ayala, Philip Morris managing director Chris Nelson, HSBC CEO Warner Manning, PLDT SVP Menardo Jimenez Jr., Unilever Philippines CEO Howard Belton, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and Isabela Governor Grace Padaca.

The CEO Excel Awards is the local version of the international IABC Excel Award, which recognizes senior executives who have successfully harnessed communication in advancing the reputation, enhancing the profitability, or achieving major objectives of their organizations.

Chair Genuino was acknowledged for his keen understanding of the needs of his employees, which are one of the major stockholders of his communication programs. By lifting the morale of the Pagcor personnel, through enhanced benefits such as salary increases and a greatly improved medical plan, a significant increase in the productivity of employees was noted. This, in turn, translated to higher profits for the corporation.

The low-key chief executive was lauded for raising the revenues of the state-run gaming firm to new record-breaking heights. During his term, Pagcor's total annual income of P14.64 billion in 2000 rose to as high as P20.21 billion in 2004, or an increase of almost P6 billion in just four years. In 2002, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) even cited Pagcor as one of the most profitable corporations in the country.

In 2005, Pagcor is expected to reach, if not surpass, its target annual income of P23 billion.

Likewise, Chair Genuino earned the judges' nod for his hands-on approach to the various socio-civic and developmental projects being undertaken by the state-run gaming firm, such as the Serbisyo Muna project of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. This project is a major component of the Pagcor chair's communication program geared towards increasing public awareness and acceptability of the corporation.

GLOBE TELECOM GETS PREFERRED 3G SPECTRUM FROM NTC

Globe Telecom is now set to roll out its 3G service as the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) granted Globe its preferred 3G spectrum. The 1945-1955 Megahertz (MHz), 2135-2145 MHz radio frequency bands awarded to Globe would allow the company to rapidly deploy 3G and deliver superior quality 3G services in the country. At the awarding of 3G frequency spectrum at the NTC were (from left) Globe regulatory affairs head V. Froilan M. Castelo, Globe wireless network technical group head Emmanuel R. Estrada, NTC Deputy Commissioner Jorge V. Sarmiento, Globe senior vice president Rodolfo A. Salalima, NTC Commissioner Ronald O. Solis, NTC Deputy Commissioner Jaime M. Fortes, Jr., Globe paralegal and admin services head Gallardo T. Auson, and Globe public relations head Jones T. Campos.

ANGEL HAPEE TO BE PART OF SEA GAMES

TV actress and Hapee toothpaste endorser Angel Locsin's smile exudes the joy and honor of being part of the opening rites of the historic Southeast Asian Games (SEA Games) held at the Quirino grandstand. Angel's presence added prestige and glamour to the momentous event. Her participation was made possible by Lamoiyan Corp, maker of the Hapee toothpaste line, which served as a major sponsor for the sporting meet. Angel is Hapee's endorser who is the perfect model of modern-day Filipinos, young, dynamic and with penchant for anything 'Pinoy'. Recognizing the sporting meet as an important opportunity to showcase Filipino athleticism and foster camaraderie amongst Southeast Asian nations, Lamoiyan Corp left no stone unturned to secure the sporting meet's success. Hapee, the company's toothpaste line was the official toothpaste of the 2005 Southeast Asian Games. Angel is shown here during the opening rites of the SEA Games.

BAX CITED IN 5TH CARGO INDUSTRY AWARDS

BAX Global Inc, Philippines, a leading supplier of Supply Chain Solutions, won the Best in Logistics and Warehousing Facilities, Diamond Category at the 5th Cargo Industry Awards sponsored by the Global Cargo Carriers Inc (GCCI). Held at the Grand Ballroom of the Westin Philippine Plaza last Nov. 25, the 5th Cargo Industry Awards highlighted the best of the best forwarders and logistics providers in the Philippines. Receiving the award is Albert Tinio, general manager-air division of BAX Global. Present are Madel Martin, president of Aerotel and John David, Cargo Manager of EVA Air.

JOLLIBEE, MCCANN ERICKSON BAG AWARD

Consistent with its thrust of promoting positive Filipino values, Jollibee Foods Corporation's Jollibee Kids' Club campaign which was interpreted by leading advertising company McCann Erickson through three television commercials (Cellphone/Bully/Graffiti), was recently named Best Branded TVC in the recent Catholic Mass Media Awards. Photo shows (from left): McCann Erickson VP and executive creative director Micky Domingo, Jollibee VP for marketing Inez Reyes and McCann Erickson president and CEO Patricia Arches with the Jollibee mascot during the award-giving ceremonies.

THE NO. 1 HIGH-END CONDOMINIUM DEVELOPER

Property Giant Federal Land Inc was recently awarded as the No. 1 High-end Condominium Developer by the 2005 National Shoppers' Choice Awards. Their portfolio boasts of numerous well-respected projects including the highly-praised GT Tower and the acclaimed Metropolitan Park - a 40-hectare 'City in a Park' development that houses the exquisite Bay Garden condominium. Photo shows Federal land, Inc FVP for marketing, Ramon Aldaba receiving the plaque during the National Shoppers' Choice awarding ceremony.

THE OFW FAMILY CLUB'S 4TH GRAND REUNION

The OFW Family Club added another year of meaningful existence as it celebrated its 4th Grand Reunion last Dec. 11, at the Philippine Trade and Training Center. Founded by Former Ambassador (to UAE) and National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) Chair lawyer Roy 'Amba' Señeres, the establishment of the OFW Family Club is in furtherance of the Señeres Family tradition of selflessly providing assistance to OFWs and their families in the Philippines. The day-long activity was packed with OFW-friendly services. The OFW Family Club - a non-stock, non-profit organization holds regular office at Unit 101 Taft Office Center, 1986 Taft Avenue cor. Gil Puyat Ave., Pasay City, with tel. nos. (632) 525-1625 or 525-1722.

Bits & Clips

PSGP meet

THE PARKINSON'S Support Group of the Philippines Foundation (PSGP) will meet on Jan. 8, (Sunday) for another lecture on the latest research studies involving Parkinson's disease, dystonia and essential tremor. An open forum will follow the lecture. The meeting will be held at the auditorium of the Cathedral Heights Building (South Tower), 14th floor, St. Luke's Medical Center, 279 E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue. Quezon City. Registration starts at 12 p.m. and free lunch and refreshments will be served courtesy of Boehringer – Ingelheim, manufacturer of the Parkinson's medication Sifrol (pramipexole). Doctor Virgilio Gerald H. Evidente, medical adviser of the PSGP said that, sometime will be devoted to care-giving issues related to Parkinson's disease and other movement disorders, and PSGP activities for 2006. Please contact Rosabel Crusio at (0915)443-6647 or the Movement Disorder Center at St. Luke's, tel. no. (02)727-5552.

Suburbia Bar's opening salvo for the New Year

NYOY VOLANTE WITH HIS NEW GROUP TOP BILLS January performers at Suburbia Bar on the 11th and the 25th . Truefaith performs on Jan. 27. Freestyle is slated on Jan. 21 back to back with all-male group Wiseguys. Other exciting entertainment line-up for this month include: all Mondays w/ new group Freeway; Tuesday attractions include 2nd runner up on ABS-CBN's Born Diva talent search Shayne with Brown Sugar Factory on Jan.17 and 31 alternating with all-male hip hop group H20 on Jan. 10 and Jan. 24. Taking center stage all Wednesdays is TJ Ortiz on vocals of Freeverse. All Thursdays with Silk and upcoming artist Ron Antonio on Jan. 12 and 26; all Fridays w/ Livewire and R& B group Twisted Pair except Jan. 27. Saturdays are a mix with 9th Avenue on Jan. 7 and Wiseguys, 14 and 28 with another all-male band 604. Suburbia is located at 1718 M. Adriatico St. Malate or call 524-6263 or 811-0725 for inquiries.

LA Gear's MPIO MP3 raffle

LA GEAR, THE FASHIONABLE APPAREL FOR TOday's funky young females is raffling off 25 of the season's coolest, must-have gadget: the MPIO FY600 MP3 player. Stock up on the latest fun and fashionable LA Gear finds at any LA Gear or Bratpack store to increase your chances of winning the hip MPIO FY600, a stylish neckband earphone-type MP3 player that's perfect for cool campus characters. Every single-receipt purchase of any LA Gear item(s) worth P 2,000 entitles you to one raffle coupon. You have until Jan. 15, so head over to LA Gear.

SBC HS '61 45th year

JAN. 7 AND 8, MARKS THE 45TH ANNIVERSARY reunion of St. Bridget's College HS Class '61 (girls' and boys' departments) of Batangas City. The highlight of this two-day affair will be the blessing of the landscaped garden fronting the St. Euphrasia Building in the campus which is a donation of the class and a donation of one house, in cooperation with Gawad Kalinga, for a poor and homeless family in Batangas City. Alumni who are now based in different parts of the world have confirmed their attendance. Those who have not confirmed yet may get in touch with the following: Sr. Lydia Ebora, RGS (063-0917-881-7117) ; Victoria Tingchuy-Vicente (063-0927-221-2460) or Gilbert Rosales (0917-528-2113).

New Year Job Madness

JOIN THE MOST HAPPENING RESUME PARTY this New Year. PeopleSupport opens its doors to interested applicants with the New Year Job Madness (A Resume Party) on Friday, Jan. 6, from 6 p.m. until 12 midnight at the PeopleSupport Center, Ayala corner Senator Gil Puyat Avenues, Makati City. Applicants will not only be processed on-the-spot, they will also be treated to food and refreshment and entertained by the live acoustic performances of Jimmy Bondoc and the 3rd Avenue band. Bring your resume for free admission. PeopleSupport has job openings for eReps (contact center representatives), collection associates, transcriptionists, part-time employees and corporate executive positions. For inquiries on the Job Madness and career opportunities, call 755-2600 or visit www.peoplesupport.com.

CHRISTMAS JAMMING WITH SONY

SONY
Sony Christmas Treasure 2005

Sony Philippines sent the Glorietta Activity Center jumping with holiday cheers, as Sony BMG's leading hit makers performed today's hottest chart-toppers. Harried shoppers were transformed into revved-up groupies as Cueshé, 6 Cycle Mind, and Brownman Revival treated the audience with rock n' rolling live performances. Lucky fans were also awarded with a chance of a lifetime; to meet-and-greet their favorite bands. Until Jan. 15, get amazing deals when you buy your Sony products in authorized Sony outlets nationwide. For more details on the on-going promos and special offers being offered in authorized Sony outlets, you may visit our website at www.sony.com.ph, call Sony's Customer Contact Center at 878-7600 or go to your nearest Sony Square at Gateway Mall, Megamall, or Park Square 1.

A heavenly vacation at Seraph Hotel Boracay

IF YOU'VE BEEN TO SERAPH HOTEL, ONE OF the de luxe hotels in Boracay, there is definitely one thing that you would immediately notice, that is, how the staff greet their guests. Because beside the usual smile on the staff's faces when you meet them, you would definitely observe their incessant bowing whenever and wherever you chanced upon them.

And these people wouldn't care how many times they have bowed to you, say, in a day. They would certainly do so as the opportunity arises.

Bowing, like in the Korean culture, is deeply imbedded in Seraph Hotel's system. It is not only a form of acknowledgement but also of respect to the presence of the resort hotel's valued guests.

Feeling appreciated and treasured, this is maybe the reason why Seraph Hotel continues to lure guests in this paradise resort all-year round. Catering to Korean as well as other foreign and local tourists, Seraph Hotel also provides its guests with only first-class amenities, from room furnishings to the food being served to the service of its friendly staff.

Now with 204 rooms, Seraph Hotel is now the biggest resort hotel in Boracay. Its amenities include three swimming pools, a gym, a game room, and a main dining restaurant which also serves as a convention area.

Its new building, which was recently inaugurated, boasts of rooms with pool access. This is ideal for honeymooners, which incidentally forms the largest slice of Seraph Hotel's market, as they can go to the pool directly through their room's rear door. Located in the second and the third floors are the castle suites, so named because the building resembles that of a castle.

Its first two buildings house the presidential and suite rooms which contain furnishings all sourced from Italy. The new building's furnishings came from China-from the big bed down to the pillows.

Seraph Hotel started its operations in Boracay in 2002 with only 60 rooms in what is now called its Emerald Building. Increasing demand even in only during the first few months of its operations necessitated the building of another 60 rooms. The new wing, with more than 80 rooms, is built to meet the continued outpouring of its guests all-year round. For inquiries, you may visit its Manila office at Casa Catalina Bldg., No. 635 Gen. Malvar St., Malate, Manila, tel. nos. 524-4825 or 524-4142. You may also log on to www.boracayseraph.com.

ProductFILES

The Asus A6R: Powerful processing capability

POWERED BY AN INTEL CELERON M PROCESsor that clocks a 1.6 Ghz speed, the Asus A6R Series is designed to provide users powerful processing capability. A 256 MB DDR, 40 GB HDD, combo drive, 15" TFT and a wireless LAN 802.11 b/g complete this baby. The 15" widescreen adopted Asus advance Color Shine glare-type LCD technology presents clear and sharp images. Combined with discrete graphics for 3D video enhancement, the Asus A6R notebook series are the mobile gateway to the virtual world. The Asus A6R offers the fastest DirectX 9.0 integrated graphics platform for Intel-based PCI Express notebooks, offering high-performance graphics for digital multimedia applications and 3D games. Power4 Gear+ is a unique technology available exclusively from Asus only. It offers eight operation modes designed specifically for various applications. Power is distributed according to the operation modes to ensure that no power goes to waste. The

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REGGIE Aspiras on shellfish /C3

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As Italian as the tenor

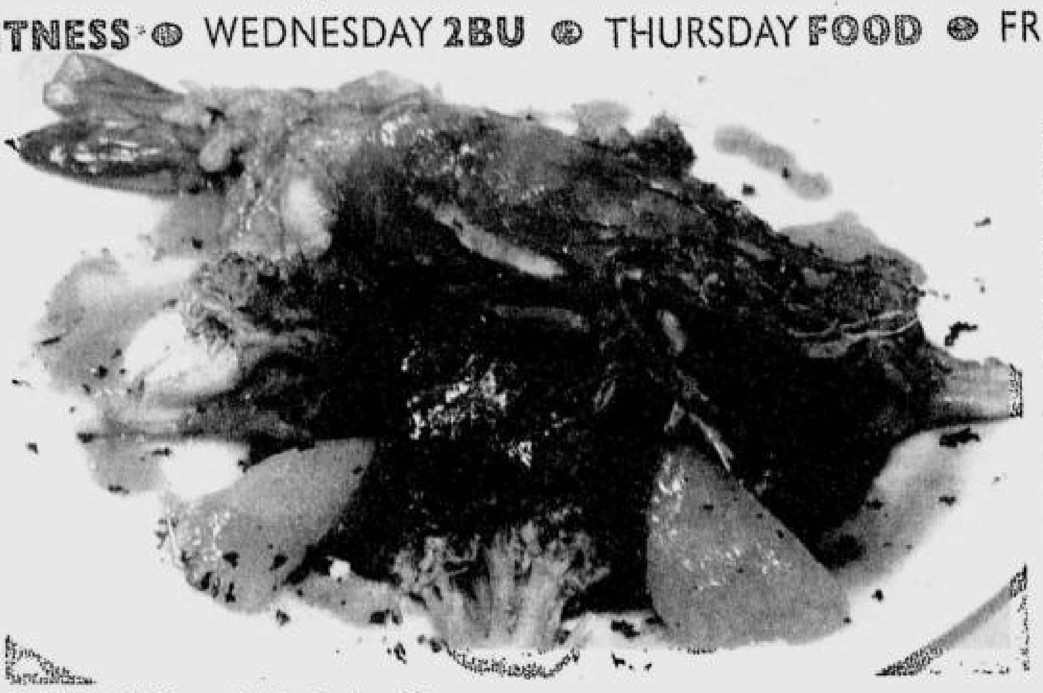
By Alex Y. Vergara

Café Caruso is a good way to get a taste of the European country

IF YOU HAVEN'T BEEN TO Italy, then perhaps one of the best ways to make a virtual trip to the Mediterranean country known for its sun, sea and good food is to dine at Café Caruso.

The restaurant on Reposo Street in Makati (tel. 8952451) serves authentic Italian food, *trattoria*-style, including signature dishes of such cities as Rome, Milan, Naples and Turin.

The Bucatini Amatriciana, for instance, is a Roman specialty. The pasta dish is served with a tomato-based sauce garnished with ground beef and bits of bacon. For the meat lover, there's the Bistella alla Fiorentina or porterhouse steak cooked the way they do it in Florence.



RAVIOLONE Nero with Seafood and Prawns

As its name implies, the Osso-Buco alla Milanese originated in Milan. It consists of a juicy shank of veal sitting on a bed of Italian rice and saffron. Café Caruso (which, of course, derived its name from famous Italian tenor Jose Caruso) also pays tribute to the cities of Turin and Naples via such specialties as Cotechino with Polentia, Spinach and Mushroom and Pizza Napolitana.

PASTA sampler: Ravioli Burro Salvia, Maccheroni Arrabbiata and Gnocchi Gorgonzola

Apart from these featured dishes, Café Caruso serves a wide array of antipasti, pizza, pasta, risotto meat, poultry and seafood dishes. Italian chef Gino Amodio, who flies to Manila from Italy every few months to train the restaurant's Filipino staff, is responsible for ensuring the dishes' authenticity.

In keeping with their desire to serve authentic Italian dishes, the owners of Café Caruso import most of the restaurant's ingredients, such as parmesan cheese, extra virgin olive oil, cold cuts and various spices, from Italy. Fresh fish, beef and poultry are sourced locally. Commercial pasta is a no-no for the restaurant; pasta is made by hand daily in its own kitchen.

Hand-tossed pizza is baked using an old-fashioned oven. A "dough man" occasionally works behind the counter tossing the round, rubbery dough to the delight of curious diners.

Owners Dario Gardini and Franco Martellotti are true Italians. After spending their vacation in Boracay and Palawan on separate occasions a little over a decade ago, the two fell in love with the Philippines and decided to stay here for good. They're both married to Filipino women.

"There aren't that many real Italian restaurants in Manila," says Gardini. "Offhand, I can think of only five. The rest are mostly Italian restaurants based on an American concept."

Gardini abandoned his original idea of building a restaurant in Boracay after realizing that most of his would-be customers are still based in Metro Manila.

The number of Italian nationals (excluding the religious) in the metropolis can barely breach 200, so Café Caruso finds itself catering to a growing Filipino clientele. Half of its customers are Filipinos, while the other half is composed of foreigners, including Japanese, Americans, French and, of course, Italians.

OLD-FASHIONED, hand-tossed pizza

ITALIAN owners Franco Martellotti and Dario Gardini

Before Café Caruso became a full-fledged restaurant almost two years ago, it was known to its patrons simply as Caruso Pizzeria. As demand for other dishes increased, the partners decided to expand their menu and refurbish the place.

The result is a casual dining experience that's cozy and elegant enough for those in the mood for fine dining. The restaurant and bar, which has an ample indoor smoking area, can accommodate between 80-100 people.

"Café Caruso is open to parties and private functions," says Gardini. "We offer clients special dishes and set menus depending on their request."

Since the partners bill Café Caruso as a classic but modern-day *trattoria* (family-owned restaurant), they try to make the dining experience as personal as possible. Thus, both of them are quite hands-on. If one partner isn't around, the other makes it a point to be present.

"We treat guests like family," says Martellotti. "We talk to them and find out what their needs are. Regulars welcome our suggestions, while first-time customers are often surprised to find out that we go out of our way to personally attend to them."

Like in the Philippines, family comes first in Italy.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

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Ever wonder what all those calories and fiber really mean? The Maya Kitchen offers a selection of trusted healthy recipes and advice focusing on healthy ingredients, cooking methods & nutritional information. Get ready for a healthy revolution and sign up now!
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Japanese home Cooking: Jan. 21 (Sat) 3 - 6 p.m. Kani salad, Japanese Curry, Tonkatsu, Katsudon, Tempura, Japanese spaghetti and hamburger by Japanese teacher P1,000 w/ free Japanese cookbook.
Traditional Japanese Cooking: Jan. 28 (Sat) 3 - 6 p.m. Miso soup, Mixed Tempura, Kamameshi, Assorted Sushi & Sashimi and Sukiyaki by Japanese teacher P1,000 with free Japanese cookbook.
Catering: Jan. 27 & 28 (Fri. & Sat.) 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Legal & technical aspect to get started in catering business, facilities, personnel, menu including portioning and quantification. Actual cooking preparation of Stuffed Chicken Thighs, Vegetable Samosa, Spicy Chicken Wings, Eggplant Skordalia, Quiche Lorraine, . P3,000 with free Catering cookbook.
CERTIFICATE COURSES WITH HANDS-ON (Limited enrolment, Pre-registration required)
Basic Culinary: Jan. 10 - 13 or Jan. 24 - 27(T-F) 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Proper hygiene, sanitation and safety; nutrition and nutritional cooking; proper mis-en-place of mirepoix, stocks, soups, sauces, marinades, use of herbs and spices combinations, proper purchasing, storage, techniques of disjointing and boning poultry, filleting fish and meat fabrication. With actual preparation of dishes from appetizer, salad eggs, pasta, seafoods, poultry and meats, dessert including garnishing for plate presentation. Free Mix & Match cookbook. P5,000.
Fundamentals of Bakery Production: Jan. 17-20 or Jan. 31-Feb. 3 (T-F) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Standard baking techniques applicable to baking application on the use of ready mixes, yeast bread, quick breads, pies, cookies and cakes. P4,000 with free cookbook.
For inquiries, visit the Maya Kitchen (Tuesdays thru Saturdays) at 8th floor, Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Ave. (Pasay Road), Makati City or call tel. 892-1185 or 892-5011 loc. 108; or e-mail us at mkitchen@ultimate.info.com.ph

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Variations on the 'lechon'

COUNTRY COOKING

Micky Fenix

Cooks have come up with different ways to jazz up the special-occasion dish, including stuffing it with paella

ON THE GOLDEN WEDDING anniversary of my parents-in-law, my eldest son said the pig population had gone down. He made the observation as he heard pigs wailing for three days before the event.

And, on the day itself, he saw how many roasted pigs were being brought into the backyard where the festivities were to be held. He was also fascinated by the story of how one *lechon* was waylaid somewhere between the roasting pit and the house and it was never found out who the perpetrators were.

My brother-in-law brought specialists from his hometown of Batangas City to roast pig in our backyard during the *pamanhikan* or when he asked my parents for my sister's hand in marriage. It was such a treat for her urbanized sisters and brother to watch the process that took the better part of the day.

One-man job

My father-in-law took less time to slaughter, clean and roast the *lechon* all by himself. He took a suckling pig from the pen mid-afternoon and the tasty *lechon* was ready for the early dinner.

That was when I learned that, in the Visayas, there was no *lechon* sauce. Liver, my husband said, was too precious to just cut up, pound and make into sauce. Besides, he added, *lechon* in that part of the country was seasoned already with any or a combination of salt, pepper, lemon grass, onions, tamarind leaves and spring onions.

And if you're curious about how *paksiw na lechon* is done there, it had all of the required mixture save for the liver sauce. Since tasting that version, I have preferred that less sweet *paksiw*.

If Manila has its *lechon* row in La Loma, Cebu has Talisay on Sundays. Vendors will cut portions by how much you want to pay rather than by the kilo. You can have Cebu *lechon* delivered in Manila. Just collect the package at the airport.

If you're in Cebu, you can watch the pig you've chosen go through the process up to the packing at the shop.

'Lechon manok'

It was in Cebu where we were presented a chicken cooked inside a *lechon*. Can you imagine how flavorful that chicken was with all the oil steaming it inside a veritable porcine oven? I suppose it's one of the ways cooks found to do something more with this too simple spit-roasted pig.

Cooks have come up with other variations, including the paella-stuffed *lechon*. Though normally associated with Lydia's, it was Glenda Barretto of Via Mare who originated this. Barretto thought up the presentation for her very first dinner for the international gourmet group, the Chaine des Rotisseurs. She recalled that it took many *lechon* before they were able to make a perfect crosswise slice where the paella stuffing held together. And the *lechon* trader that helped her in the experiment was Lydia's.

Myrna Segismundo of Restaurant 9501 de-bones a suckling pig, cuts it lengthwise and then rolls each piece into a cylinder before roasting in the oven. She serves her *lechon* version with a grilled liver with red wine sauce.

Five ways

And then there is *pritchon*. It's not, strictly speaking, *lechon* but deep-fried (*prito*) whole suckling pig served with pancakes and different sauces. This has inspired artist and part-time chef Claude Tayag to make his own five ways with *lechon*.

We tasted Tayag's variation years ago and were glad to be reminded of it recently. It was at the Lubao, Pampanga, home of Reimon Guttierez whose invitation said to include friends to help finish the big *lechon*.

We heard from their friend, historian Ambeth Ocampo, that he had eaten *lechon* of an *arugula*-fed pig from the farm of Guttierez. Laughing when reminded of that, Guttierez said it was at a time when he had a surplus of *arugula* from his bio-dynamic farm.

When the big *lechon* arrived, guests started eating the crisp skin, the first undressing, so to speak. Unfortunately, Tayag was delayed (traffic in the province is as bad as in Metro Manila). The next to be stripped was the flesh. You can tell if the *lechon* is cooked properly if pieces come out in thin long portions.

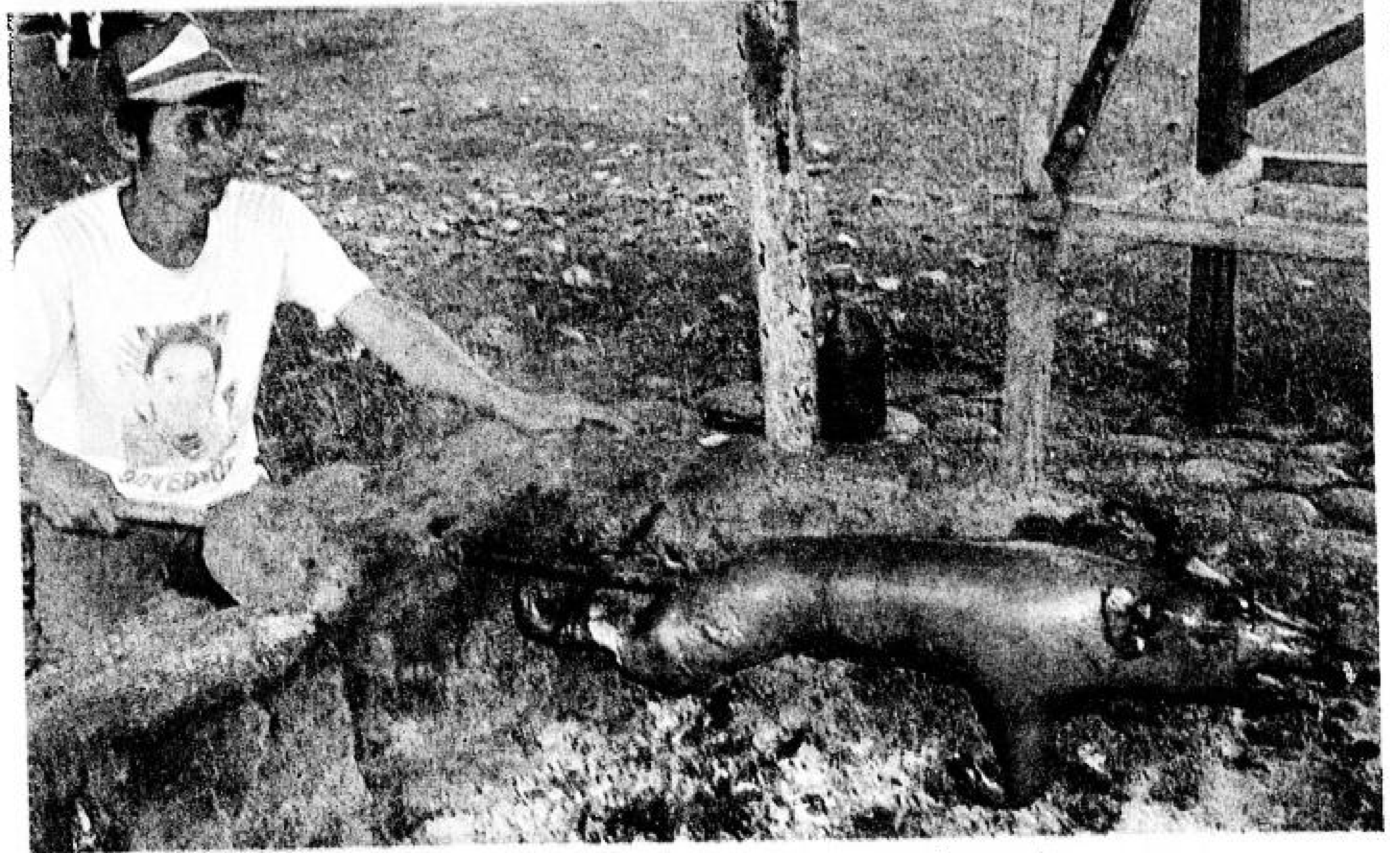
When Tayag arrived, the first thing he did was lay out the sauces that looked like an artist's painting colors—brown, green, white. Turned out to be liver sauce, Oriental sauce and garlic-yogurt.

Had he arrived on time, we would have had the crunchy skin as the first of the five ways, *papakin*, something to munch on, according to Tayag. After that, the *liempo* (belly) was deep-fried and put inside *pita* bread with your choice of sauces.

The legs and head were chopped and cooked as *sinigang* in *bayabas*, which Tayag christened the "*baya-baisse*." The *pata* was cubed and then cooked as *asadong matua* (old-fashioned braising). The leftover ribs had enough meat for charcoal-broiling (*inihaw*), perhaps the most surprising resurrection and the best one yet.

The *inihaw* version beat my favorite, deep-fried *lechon* dipped in *toyo* with *calamansi*. But, of course, we must still have the usual vinegar-stewed *lechon paksiw*. The best name for that dish, "The Morning After," was given by Morita Roces in her old menu at her former restaurant, The Only Place, on Donada Street, Manila.

E-mail the author at pinoyfood04@yahoo.com



A WELCOME sight on our arrival at the Davao Floirendo farm was this *lechon* roasting on a pit.

The sweetness of Dumaguete

(Editor's note: This essay is a finalist in the 2005 Doreen Gamboa Fernandez food writing awards.)

By Didith Tan Rodrigo

IN A SEA OF DUST-COLORED BUILDINGS, the school-owned canteen of the Negros Oriental High School (NOHS) in Dumaguete City stands out as a gleaming white beacon to the school's 4,000 students. Above its entrance is a white sign with a pink border. It reads "Speak English."

The white-and-pink faux marble tile floor is glossy and polished despite constant foot traffic. The canteen's front, left and rear are open to provide ventilation but delimited with white bars. Girls and boys hunch over white tables and chairs. The right walled side of the room is occupied by a showcase of rice, hot meals, desserts, candies and biscuits. Baskets of V-Cut, Piatos, and other chips hang from the white lintels. To the back of the room, the kitchen is abuzz with staff cutting, mixing, boiling, steaming or frying the next meal or snack.

The canteen is managed by Wilfreda Villalon. It has three principal cooks. A wizened Mang Tonio is responsible for the hot meals. Youthful Jo-an does the baking. Sixty-year-old Auntie Flora Oira is the canteen's equivalent of a pastry chef.

From Mondays to Fridays, from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., Auntie Flora is dressed in an apron and a hairnet as she prepares the day's sweets: *puto maya* (a sweet rice cake eaten with hot chocolate), *champorado* (chocolate rice pudding), *dinuldog* (sweet coconut milk pudding, *ginataan* in Tagalog), among others.

No bigger than a forefinger

One of her culinary treats is *budbud kabog*, a sweet cake the size of an adult's forefinger. There are different kinds of *budbud*. Some are made, for example, of *malagkit* (glutinous rice). But what distinguishes this *budbud* is the use of millet, *kabog*. Hence, it is generally only available in Dumaguete, Bayawan, and other localities where millet is grown.

Auntie Flora does not speak Tagalog or English. With the help of her colleague, Isabel Romano, Auntie Flora explains that she only learned how to cook three years ago, when she joined the NOHS canteen. She cooked at home, but her dishes were limited to "*mga ordinaryo lang* (the ordinary ones)." Working in the canteen required her to expand her repertoire. Mang Tonio and Villalon mentored her on new dishes and food preparations.

To make *budbud kabog*, Auntie Flora soaks the *kabog* one hour prior to cooking. She squeezes the milk from five coconuts and combines it with sugar. She boils the solution until it is thick and adds the *kabog*, cooking until it is tender. She then forms the *budbud kabog* by wrapping cooked *kabog* in young banana leaves and steaming them for one hour.

Smell of banana

Whether freshly steamed or reheated (it freezes beautifully), *budbud kabog* smells of sweet banana leaves and rich coconut milk. It is soft without being mushy and firm enough to hold its shape. The individual millet grains meld into a unified whole. *Budbud kabog* is sweet but not satiating. The coconut oil gives it a buttery texture that allows it to slide almost unperceptively down your throat. You can easily gulp down five or six pieces and still want for more. Villalon recommends eating *budbud kabog* with thick, native chocolate and ripe mangoes. The combination is divine.

Auntie Flora says that, for *budbud kabog* to be good, "*Kailangan eksakto ang timpla* (the combination of ingredients must be precise)." Is there bad *budbud kabog* out there? Yes, there is, Villalon says, "*Yung kulang sa gata* (Those that do not have enough coconut milk)." Some *budbud kabog*-makers, she says, are too commercial. The NOHS canteen, on the other hand, emphasizes service and not profit, so their food's prices are low while quality is high.

The emphasis on service also leads to a full disclosure attitude towards recipes. Both Auntie Flora and Villalon are surprisingly forthcoming with their formulations. "There are no trade secrets," Villalon says. A teacher of Technology and Livelihood Education, she says, "These are the same recipes I give to my students." Although she has not taught them *budbud kabog* this year, she is thinking of including it in her November syllabus, when she teaches native delicacies.

The canteen caters primarily to NOHS students. However, it accepts orders for *budbud kabog* and other products. The staff routinely entertains requests from teachers, the Department of Education Division of Dumaguete City, government workers from City Hall, friends, and visitors. To order *budbud kabog* from the NOHS canteen, please call Villalon through the principal's office at (035) 2252684 or (035) 4220326. Villalon also recommends their *empanadas*, but that is another story.

US rejects dumped on other markets

THE CONSUMER

Marietta Velasco Giron

DID YOU BUY A BUNK BED with metal tubes or an espresso and cappuccino maker with steam tubes?

Make sure they are not among those recalled from the United States market. The bunk beds were recalled reportedly because they were found to be prone to collapse. The more than 20,000 espresso and cappuccino makers were liable to burst under pressure.

They are just two of countless products being recalled in the US for health or safety reasons. But, instead of being fixed or destroyed, the substandard products find their way to markets outside the US.

The Consumer Reports recently reported on how unsafe goods recalled by the US Consumer Product Safety Commission were shipped out to other markets. Some imported goods, for example, were supposed to be returned by distributors to foreign manufacturers. Not all defective products made it back to their places of origin.

The publication said, "You may have thought that dangerous household products that are stopped at US ports or discovered on store shelves are either repaired or destroyed. But millions of hazardous products, including toys, cribs, electrical goods and flammable clothing, have been gathered up and sent abroad."

Laws differ among countries and what may be banned in the US may be legal somewhere else, the Consumer Reports explained.

But all is not lost. The report said product safety officials in the US and in other countries were trying to develop global safety and performance standards for many products, including secondhand and recalled goods.

However, global standards would mean little if these were not enforced, the report pointed out.

What you can do

The following buying tips are from Consumer Reports, an Amercian consumer magazine:

- Avoid no-name products because there is no way to track down any manufacturer in case of problems.
- Be cautious of products with label that conflicts with information somewhere in the packaging, or is written in ungrammatical English.
- Be wary of extraordinary bargains. Items that are far too cheap than comparable products sold elsewhere may be cheap because these are counterfeit or otherwise defective.
- Beware of products sold by street merchants, flea market vendors and other "informal" retailers. It can be hard to collect from fly-by-night vendors. (Local newspapers reported that investigators suspected that a recent fire was caused by a cell-phone charger that overheated and exploded. The owner of the house where the fire originated said he bought the charger for only P50 from a sidewalk vendor.)
- Test product if it works before paying for it.

Consumers who have access to the Internet can find more information about items recalled by the US product safety commission by periodically checking www.recalls.gov

Commendable

Carol Tongco is all praises for SM Megamall sales ladies and security officer: "In the middle of the Christmas shopping rush at SM, something close to a miracle happened to me there... I recovered my lost clutch bag. An employee at the infants wear department found the bag and handed it to the security desk. It contained a three-month old 6630 Nokia, Dell Palmtop, all my credit cards and some cash.

"The security officer who attended to me was courteous, respectful and reassuring. I thank salesperson Corazon Rivera and her co-workers, among them Renalyn, as well as security officer Saldua. They remind us that there are still good people in our midst in spite of the crime and scams we hear about."

From Elias D. Micael III: "I appreciate the way the staff at the old domestic airport handles the taxi queue this holiday season. I arrived from Bacolod last Tuesday night in a heavy downpour and was worried I couldn't get a taxi considering the big crowd of arriving passengers. Instead, I found a well-organized taxi waiting area with passengers and cabs in orderly queues. I am happy to note that discipline can still be a trait among Filipinos."

(The system has actually been in place for some time now that's why it works so well even during the holiday rush. We have already received letters commending the setup.)

Feedback

From Jen CC Tan (jencctan@gmail.com: "Thank you for writing about our cloth diapers (Dec. 22 column). We have had a number of inquiries, many from grandparents... there were fathers, too. How nice to see fathers involved [in caring for] their children!

On "shrinking *pandesal*" (Dec. 29 column), M. Galang and J. Maxwell wrote: "*Hindi ba dapat tataas lang ang presyo pero hindi magbabago ang* size *at* quality *ng produkto. Kung sinasabi nila na tumaas ang* flour, yeast, sugar etc., then, of course, they have all the reason to jack up their prices *pero 'di naman dapat na liitan at ibahin ang timpla* to the dismay of the buying public."

E-mail the author at mvgiron07@yahoo.com

The secret to easy barbecuing

BARBECUE-LOVING Pinoys no longer have to worry about preparing the marinade for their favorite dish.

Mama Sita's Barbecue Marinade produces barbecues that are golden in color with the perfect balance of sweetness, tang and piquancy. No artificial substitutes are used to protect the natural zest and flavors of the ingredients.

The marinade is Mama Sita's own special concoction, known only to her and her closest relatives. It is made from naturally grown herbs and spices from community farms in the Philippines' mountainous regions.

With Mama Sita's Barbecue Marinade, preparing the perfect barbecue has never been easier and less time-consuming. Just marinate chicken, pork, fish or seafood with Mama Sita's Barbecue Marinade for at least 15 minutes, turning occasionally to distribute the mix evenly.

Then skewer the cutlets and start grilling. Mama Sita's Barbecue Marinade can make anyone a barbecue pro with very little effort.

A clam-or for names

SHELLFISH PLATTER as this one served at Bocarinos of the New World Renaissance Hotel, includes oysters, crabs, shrimps, among others.

> Many shellfish varieties are not available in Manila and only have Visayan names

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

HAPPY NEW YEAR! WE begin 2006 by answering questions.

I read the English-Filipino names of fishes. I was wondering if you can help me with names for shellfish. It will help me buy these kinds of food in the market if ever I go out of the Philippines.

LIAN

Here are the most common ones. Thanks to Mida Food Corp. for helping me out.

Mollusks

Green mussel—*tahong*
Brown mussel—*abahong* (Visayan)
Clams—generic name: *halaan*

But since there are more varieties of clams in Iloilo/Visayas not available in Manila, we put the varieties here:

Giant clam—*tipay*
Hen clam—*kagaykay* (Visayan), *katakaw* (Tagalog)
Jacknife clam—*bilaog* (Visayan), *tikhan* (Aklanon)
Mangrove mud clam—*imbao* (Ilonggo)
Mud clam—*tuway* (Visayan), *paros* (Tagalog)
Sand clam—*bugaton* (Visayan), *saropsaropan* (Tagalog)
Venus or surf clam—*balinday* (Ilonggo)
Wedge or bean clam—*agihis* (Visayan)
Nylon shell or yellow clam—*akegai-asari* (Visayan), *badoy* (Bicolano)
Bay scallops—*tikab*
Oyster—*talaba* (Tagalog), *sisi* (Visayan)
Cockles—*litob* (Visayan)
Conch—*baka-baka* (Aklanon); a common protein source, it is cooked with vegetables and coconut milk.
Abalone—*sobra-sobra* (Visayan)
Kidney or fan-shell scallops—*tarab*
Asian moon or sun moon scallop—*abaniko* (Visayan), *lampirong* (Ilonggo)
Window-pane shell—*kapis* (Tagalog), capiz (Ilonggo), *pi-us* (Aklanon); its meat is popular as a viand and appetizer. Shell is used extensively for shell craft and is the basis for an extensive cottage industry.
Leopard cone—*apugan* (Visayan); the meat is tasty. Broil and serve as appetizer.
Snail—*kuhol*
Angel wing clam—*diwal*

Cowrie

Meat is served in a tasty seafood soup and the shells are sold in shell shops.

Money cowrie—*sigay* (Visayan)
Tiger cowrie—*batotoy* (Visayan)
Sea urchin—*tayong* (Ilonggo), *tuyom* (Cebuano)
Sea cucumber—*balat* or *balatan*

Shrimps

White (wild)—*putian*
White (in ponds)—*suati* (*suaheng puti*)
Tiger prawn—*sugpo*
Fresh water prawn—*ulang*
Southern velvet shrimp (thick-skinned small shrimp)—*kuakit*
Pink shrimp—*suahe*
Brown wild-caught tiger—*bulik*

Lobster

Spiny lobster—*banagan*
Slipper lobster—*pitik*
Mud lobster—*kulukoy* (Tagalog)

Crabs

Blue swimming crab—*alimasag*
Mud crab—*alimango*
Spanner crab/red frog crab—*curacha*
Shore crab—*talangka* (Tagalog)
Land crab—*kuray* (Ilongo)

Masala fancier

My favorite is *masala*. The one I buy is not the same. I tried it in my recipes but it's different. I like the smell and flavor of *masala*. Can you help me and would you have a simple recipe for it with seafood?

EVAN

Masala means mixture of spices, anywhere from two to 15. There isn't one recipe for this. Every home has one tailor-made to suit its needs and preferences. It also varies from region to region. These blends are the secrets to the most treasured recipes of each household.

The most popular of the *masalas* is the Garam Masala. *Garam* means chili, hot and spicy, therefore Garam Masala is hot spice mixture. Perhaps the reason for its popularity is because we are most exposed to food from northern India, the region where the blend is preferred due to its cold winters.

I agree that store-bought ones aren't as good. They might have been on the shelves for a while and spices are at best when whole and freshly ground, maximum shelf life for ground spices is six months.

Here's the recipe of Digvijaya Singh of the Princely House of Sailana. Adjust the quantity of each ingredient until you find a blend that is most pleasant to you. For ingredients, call Assad at UN Ave. (5261349).

6 g each of the following: black cumin seeds, cumin seeds, cloves, bay leaves, black cardamom seeds, cardamom, cinnamon, peppercorns
3 g each of mace, dry ginger
Saffron, optional

Grind spices until fine, pass through a sieve.

Pointers: Use whole spices, toast on a dry pan over heat before grinding on a spice mill.

Evan, here are two simple recipes. Though *masala* isn't used in its authentic context, it still adds a delicious twist to otherwise gloomy everyday dishes.

Masala Shrimps

2 tbsp oil
4 tbsp butter
3/4 c peeled garlic cloves, sliced
Salt to taste
2 tsp tomato paste
1 fresh chili or chili powder/flakes
1½ tsp Garam Masala
½ k shrimps, peeled and deveined
3 tbsp coriander leaves

Heat oil and butter, add garlic, add the rest of the ingredients.

Cook until shrimps are done. Garnish with whole coriander sprigs.

Spice Baked Lapu-lapu

1 ½ k *lapu-lapu* whole, cleaned
1 lemon

Lay fish on baking dish. Season with salt, pepper and squeeze lemon juice over it.

2 tbsp vegetable oil
2 c finely chopped onion
¼ c vegetable oil
2 tbsp garlic
2 tsp minced ginger
1 fresh Thai chili or green *pangsigang*, sliced
1 c chopped fresh tomatoes
¼ tsp ground turmeric
2 tsp Garam Masala
1 tsp salt
1 tsp sugar

Heat oil. Sauté ingredients, add *masala*, salt, sugar and cook until tomatoes are tender. Cool.

Pour mixture over fish. Before baking, pour 1 c coconut milk (first extraction).

Bake for 30 minutes covered with foil at 350 °F until fish is done.

Garnish with coriander sprigs

E-mail the author at raspiras@inquirer.com.ph

Roasts, sauces and sides

THE REGGIE ASPIRAS School of Culinary Arts will conduct the following classes:

Jan. 9—Roast Chicken Collection—Roast Chicken with Bone Marrow and Mushroom Gravy, "Iberian Chicken" (Garlic Chicken), Curry Roast with Mango Chutney and Indian Pilaf, Roast Butter Chicken in Butter Sauce, Roast Chicken Galantina; side dishes

Jan. 11—Crowning Glory—Succulent Crown Roasts of Pork, Beef and Lamb done right (all new). Class includes rubs, sauces, stuffing, relishes, side dishes

Jan. 13—Home-cured Breakfast Corned Beef and Bacon (all new)—Learn the art of curing two of your breakfast favorites. Everyone takes home their own slab.

Jan. 14—Roast Beef Lechon Baka Style—Tender Chunks of beef marinated and roasted to perfection, served with sauces and side dishes

Call 9289296, 9273008, 6335162.

Freebies fit for 'royalty'

GET A SUPER BOWL ROYALty Card with a minimum initial purchase of P500 at any Super Bowl of China branch until Jan. 31. Complete all orders listed on the card and get a limited-edition, one-of-a-kind 2006 Feng Shui Planner for free.

The planner will serve as guide to everyone, regardless of animal sign in the Chinese horoscope, in love, business, career, leisure and life in the Year of the Dog that begins Jan. 29.

Super Bowl of China's Royalty Card lets you get more freebies the more you order. Six orders of main dishes get you one free order of Yang Chow Fried Rice; eight orders of dim sum mean one free order of bottomless iced tea, lemonade or softdrink; six orders of roasts (except century egg) gets a free order of Crispy Lemon Chicken.

Six orders of Super Bowl's noodle dishes get a free order of Pork Siomai while a free order of Shanghai Dumplings comes with six orders of Rice Toppings. Eight orders of soup and congee dishes mean one free order of Mango Pudding or Mango Sago.

Super Bowl of China Restaurants are in Glorietta 4; Jupiter Street, Makati; Festival Mall, Alabang; SM City North Edsa; SM Megamall; SM City Fairview; Promenade, Greenhills; SM San Lazaro; Blue Wave, Marikina; Eastwood City Walk, Libis; and at Gateway Mall, Araneta Center. Also visit the affiliated Big Buddha Restaurant in Greenbelt 3. Soon to open are branches in Tomas Morato, Quezon City and Blue Wave, Macapagal Avenue.

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Celebrate it!

Come to Hong Kong for the Chinese New Year's non-stop fun and festivities.

Get ready for the 10th anniversary of the Cathay Pacific International Chinese New Year Night Parade on 29 January! As the first mega-event to kick off 2006 Discover Hong Kong Year, it's brimming with colourful tradition, dazzling entertainment and scintillating action! Come experience a unique fusion of ancient customs and modern fun!

Apart from all the fun of the night parade, events include a spectacular Fireworks Display* in the harbour (30 January) and the most exotic Flower Markets (27-28 January).

There's also plenty of fast-paced action at the Chinese New Year Horseracing (31 January) and the International Soccer Tournament (29 January & 1 February)!

Catch the festivities that run from 27-31 January and discover all that Hong Kong has to offer during the Chinese New Year!

For more information, please visit DiscoverHongKong.com or contact your local travel agent.

*Event to be confirmed

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1. Promo Period: 27 November 2005 to 24 January 2006.
2. Minimum of ₱500 single-receipt Visa purchase will allow Visa cardholder to register his/her Visa transaction for a chance to win one (1) of seven (7) Family of Four packages to Hong Kong Disneyland on March 2-4, 2006. PLUS HK$5,000 pocket money*

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TEMPURA Japanese Grill's best-selling ebi tempura

Table-top grilling of Japanese favorites

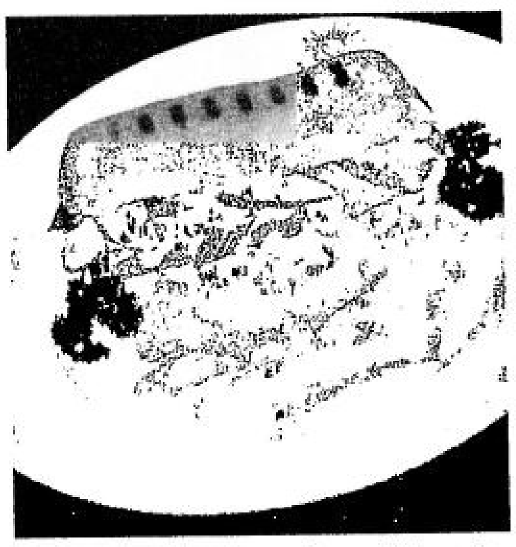
DINING OUT

TEMPURA Japanese Grill Restaurant offers authentic Japanese food, like the best-selling ebi tempura packed with Omega 3. It is the only restaurant with the Yakiniku table equipped with grilling and built-in exhaust to let diners cook their own food. The grill is smokeless and odorless. Tempura Japanese Grill has branches in Retiro, Tomas Morato, Greenhills, Alabang Town Center and UN Avenue, Manila. Another branch will open at Convergy's Bldg. in Ayala Ave. and Juno cor. Makati Ave., Makati.

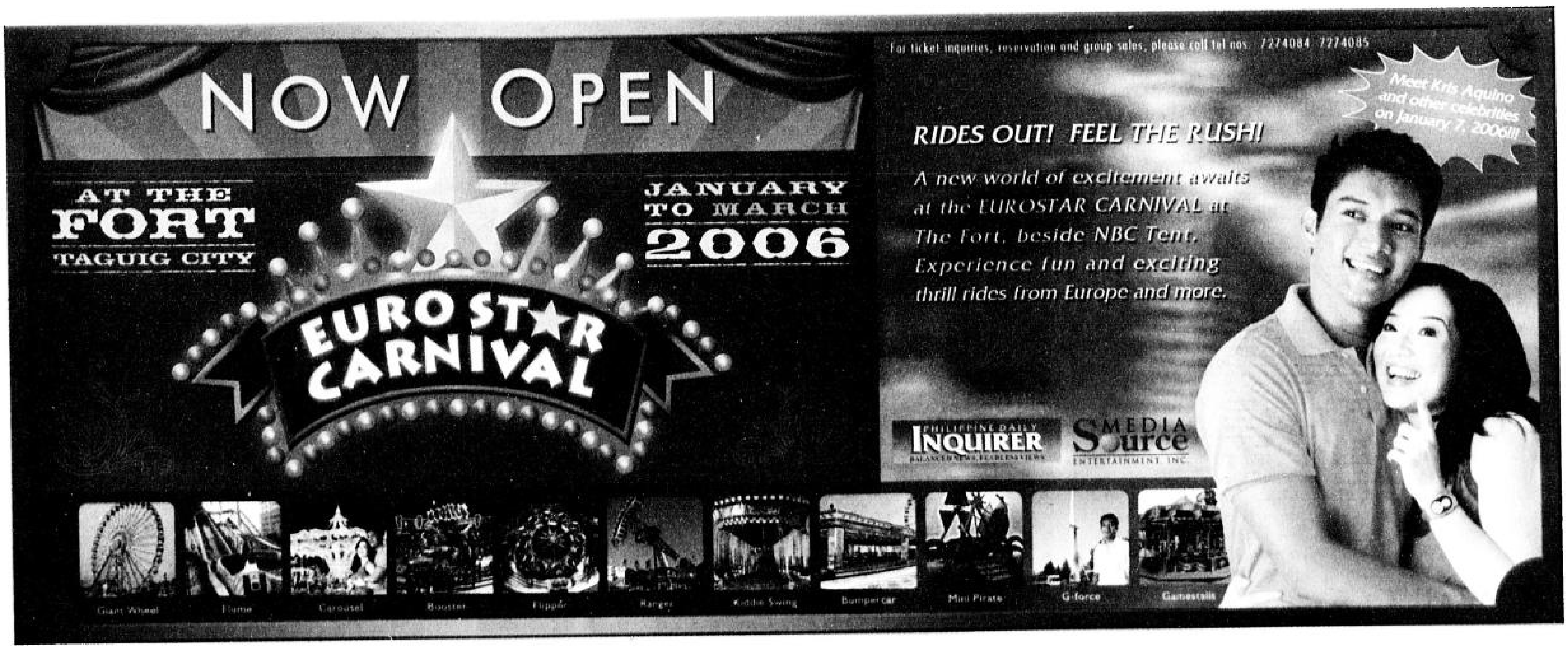
METRO Phi Restobar offers Asian and Western cuisine like Chicken Teriyaki, Fettuccini Pesto and Grilled Liempo. The restaurant's bestsellers include the Mexican Caesar Salad, Coconut Curried Prawns and Green Tea Cheesecake. Metro Phi is at the Metrowalk Commercial Complex, Meralco Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City. Call 6388896 or 6872758.

TEAK Bistro serves culinary specialties prepared by five renowned chefs: Dundee Magallanes, Jane Paredes, Eduardo Quimson, Jill Sandique and Heny Sison. The restaurant's appetizers include Seafood Nori Purses, Spring Rolls stuffed with Smoked Fish and Glass Noodles served with separate dips like the sweet chili sauce and a balsamic vinegar reduction. Teak also serves white pizza, the *bihod* or Fish Roe Pasta and Yellow Submarine, a lamb curry and rice dish seasoned with raisins and diced tomatoes. Also available are Green Hornet, a chicken and rice dish seasoned with parsley; Black Magic, a creamy paella with squid ink, and Adobo Crepe. Desserts include Brownie Cheesecake Overload, Banana Cream Pie, White Choco Crème Brûlée and Devil's Island. Call 8983365 or e-mail teak_bistro@yahoo.com.

FUZION Smoothie Café has launched its Tipsy Smoothies, including Indigo Conspiracy, Agent Orange, Sex on the Peach, Very Bailey Nice and Pretty in Pink. A new line of specialty coffees include Hong Kong Cafe Latte, Bailey Latte, Mon Cheri Cafe Latte, Double Espresso, Classic Latte, Cappuccino, Cafe Mocha and White Coffee. Fuzion also serves South Beach grilled specialties such as Herb-Smothered Pork Chop, Southwestern Spring Pork Chop, Classic Pork Chop and Cajun Smoked Chicken—all served with organic Mexican Brown Rice. Fuzion branches are at Tomas Morato; Citywalk in Eastwood, Libis; Rodeo Drive in Robinson's Galleria; Podium; Greenhills Promenade, and Greenbelt 3.



MOCHA BLENDS has another addition to its menu, the Creamy Crab Sandwich —*pan de sal*, baked and toasted and filled with crab meat. Dressing is made of cream cheese, yogurt. Mocha Blends also serves breakfast, pastas, Australian fusion pies, pastries and cakes. Call 3762889 to 90 or 3743098.



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  Peso hits 3-year high before closing at P52.585 to $1
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  Architect of glitzy Dubai takes over as ruler after his brother, the emir, dies
- **SPORTS / A18**
  'Bata' Reyes tops world pool money list with $279,169
- **ENTERTAINMENT /A2-1**
  Letter from Steven S., holiday notes from TomKat, etc. swamp PDI man in Hollywood

Gov't checks 'rolling store' hoarding, avoids traders

DI SILA PWEDENG MAG LOKO DAHIL DI NA SILA IBOBOTO

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

ARE BARANGAY CHAIRS and councilors more trustworthy than traders in hawking subsidized instant noodles and rice in poor communities?

GOV'T/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Sharon fights for life after massive brain hemorrhage

JERUSALEM—Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was fighting for his life on Thursday after suffering a massive brain hemorrhage, throwing

SHARON/ A9

ARIEL SHARON

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Friday, January 6, 2006 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 29 P18
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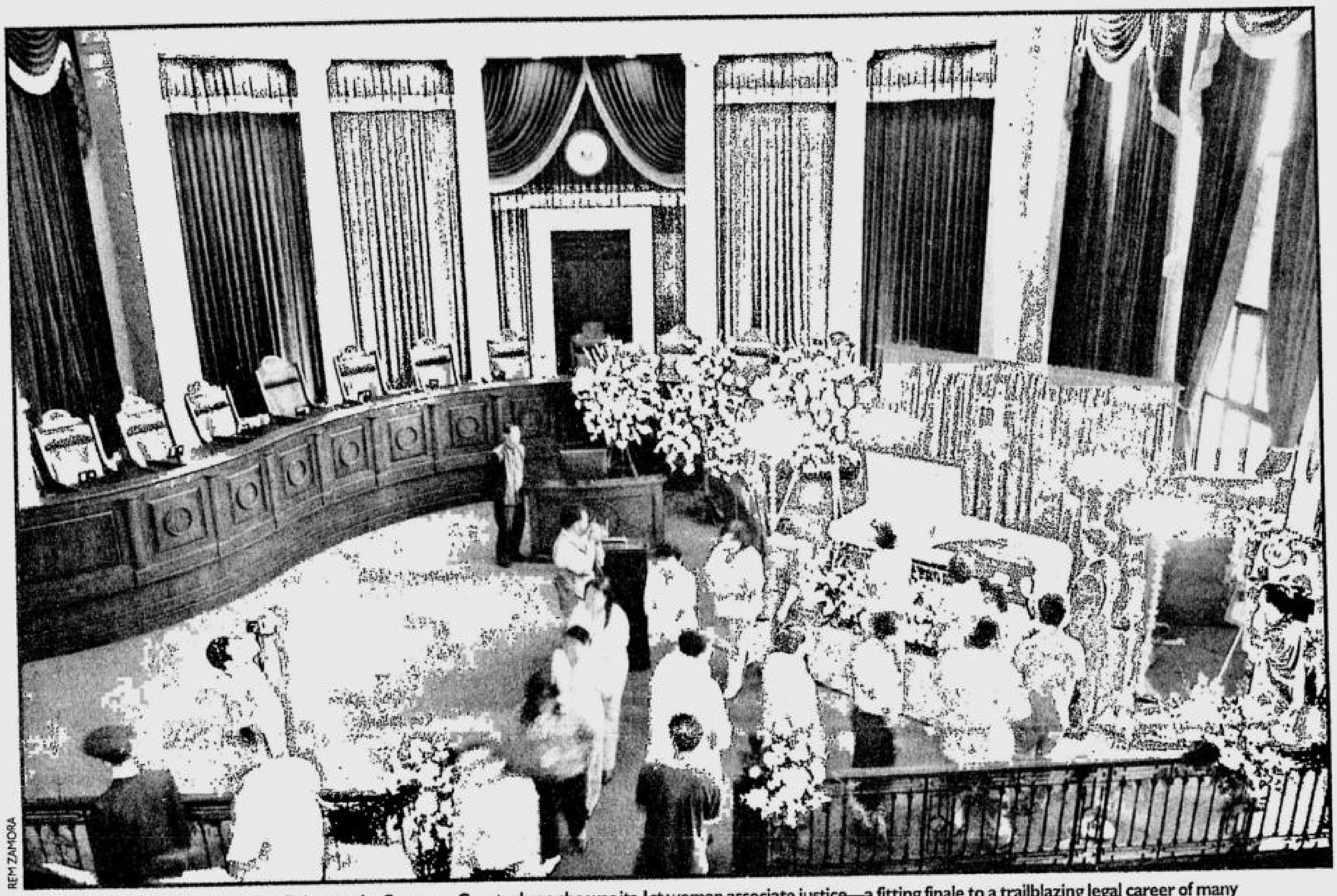
'FVR only seeks dialogue'

Palace also says Ramos reveals 'unflattering details' in Drilon-Sotto meet



REM ZAMORA

THE LAST VISIT of Cecilia Muñoz-Palma to the Supreme Court where she was its 1st woman associate justice—a fitting finale to a trailblazing legal career of many firsts—turns into a celebration of "her private character and public virtues." Chief Justice Panganiban led legal luminaries and court employees heap tribute on the lady, once dubbed "the only justice with balls" during the Marcos years. Interment is set for Jan. 10 at the Loyola Memorial in Marikina after the 1 p.m Mass at Mt. Carmel in Quezon City.

By Christine O. Avendaño
and Cynthia D. Balana

FORMER PRESIDENT FIDEL Ramos is seeking a dialogue with opponents of President Macapagal-Arroyo—not an alliance with them—in a bid to heal political divisions, his spokesperson said yesterday.

Malacañang also said that Ramos had expressed "unequivocal support" to Ms Arroyo and that he had dropped demands that she state publicly her opposition to proposals for the scrapping of the 2007 elections.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said Ramos disclosed to ranking Cabinet officials "unflattering details of his recent meeting with Senate President Franklin Drilon and former Sen. Vicente Sotto III.

Bunye said Ramos himself had assured Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Presidential Political Adviser Gabriel Claudio on two separate occasions of his continued backing of the Arroyo administration.

"(Ramos') words were very reassuring, very unequivocal as far as his support for this administration," Bunye told reporters.

Ed Malay, Ramos' media adviser, said the meeting with Drilon and Sotto was an initiative by both sides to promote political stability and had nothing to do with a proposed alliance of former Presidents.

"Why should FVR (Ramos) make any move to form an alliance with the opposition ... when they themselves are far from forging a united front?" Malay said.

Ramos talked to Ermita after seeing him at the necrological rites for the late Sen. Robert

FVR ONLY/ A4

Church goes on TV with own station

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HIERarchy has launched its own television station called "TV Maria" amid aggressive proselytizing by other Philippine-based Christian sects on television.

It joins the Iglesia ni Cristo (Net 25 and Gem TV), Ang Dating Daan (block timer on UNTV 37 and RJTV) and Jesus Is Lord (QTV 11) in using television to reach out to members and possible converts.

The Archdiocese of Manila, backed by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), quietly launched TV Maria on New Year's Day on Channel 21, said Msgr. Hernando Coronel, CBCP secretary general.

Channel 21 is supported by Dream Satellite TV of businessman Antonio "Tonyboy" Cojuangco.

TV Maria, the first Catholic channel emanating from Manila, was named so to honor the role of Mary as the one who points the way toward Jesus.

The shows in the new channel, now aired 24 hours daily, are all about Catholic doctrine, family enrichment and the youth.

The CBCP has been getting high media mileage mainly on political issues, particularly the scandal centered on President Macapagal-Arroyo, according to Coronel.

"We are always visible in the media but this concerns political matters," he told reporters yesterday. "What we are concerned (about) are the values especially in defense of family and life."

TV Maria was launched at a time when a number of high-ranking Church officials have been complain-

CHURCH/ A4

RAFFY LERMA

EMOTIONALLY CHARGED FUNERAL of former Sen. Robert Barbers at the Manila Memorial Park: A gun salute from his former police colleagues, the release of 61 doves and butterflies and a funeral cortege bearing his remains drawn by a white horse for that last, slow, tearful march to the final place. *(Story on Page A2.)*

Erap welcomes unity with Ramos, Aquino

By Nelson F. Flores, Michael Lim Ubac and Philip C. Tubeza

EX-PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRAda yesterday welcomed a move to form an alliance of former Chief Executives—himself, Corazon Aquino and Fidel Ramos—against President Macapagal-Arroyo, but an administration ally said the proposal was an "impossible dream."

In a statement to the INQUIRER, Estrada said "suggestions from the majority of our impoverished people for the three former Presidents to join hands to find ways to alleviate the plight of our people is not only a welcome move but a step in the right direction."

"For five years, the Filipino people have suffered and it is high time that we get together for the good of this country," he added.

Estrada's reaction followed reports quoting his former agrarian reform secretary, Horacio Morales, as saying that the United Opposition (UNO) would form an alliance of the three former Presidents to compel Ms Arroyo to step down.

Morales said the proposal was made during a meeting of the UNO, an umbrella group of various opposition parties, in mid-December and could happen if Ramos and Aquino paid Estrada a visit at his rest house in Tanay, Rizal.

ERAP/ A4

Cops free 5 of 11 men held in judge's murder

By Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau
and Luige A. del Puerto
in Manila

IMUS, CAVITE—FIVE MEN ARRESTED for their supposed involvement in the killing of Pasay City Judge Henrick Gingoyon were released Wednesday night, police said yesterday.

Police also hinted that a ranking police officer implicated in the killing was not yet off the hook. But they kept reporters guessing on the evidence, if any, against Senior Supt. Manuel Barcena.

Supt. Rodel Sermonia, Cavite police intelligence chief, said no evidence was found to link the five suspects to the Dec. 31 ambush-slay.

The five, together with six others now charged with murder, were rounded up by police authorities in separate raids on Monday and Tuesday on houses in Green Valley and Queensrow Subdivision in Barangay Molino, Bacoor, Cavite.

Gingoyon's residence is in the same barangay.

At a press conference in Manila, police did not have much to say about the progress of the case.

But they said the alleged trigger man, Rodolfo Cuer, was also involved in the killing of Japanese national Uehara Tsotomo in Las Piñas City in November 2005.

Police likewise kept their lips sealed on the possible motive and mastermind of the daring noontime murder.

The National Bureau of Investiga-

COPS/ A6

Poor girl finds, returns ₱300,000 that biker lost

By DJ Yap

THE QUESTION ARISES: WOULD OTHERS have done the same?

Cristina Bugayong, 12, lives in a cramped house with her parents and seven siblings.

The sixth-grader goes to a public school with only P10 in her pocket, and helps sell cafeteria food in her free time.

Her mother Luzviminda is the breadwinner of the household, but is barely able to make ends meet.

When .Cristina picked up "at least ₱300,000" on Wednesday night, she could

POOR/ A9

JOAN BONDOC

CASH IN HAND: There's a priceless lesson to be learned from Cristina Bugayong, 12, Grade 6 student at the Tomas Morato Elementary School in Quezon City, whose honesty is as rare as a congressman not beholden to the Palace. Her mother Aling Nena is right proud of her.

Second FrontPage

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao will have cloudy skies with rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. Eastern and Southern Luzon and Eastern Visayas will have mostly cloudy skies with rainshowers. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

COMPILED BY CYRIL L BONABENTE, PDI RESEARCH/01/06/06 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

'Let AFP handle Daquil'

By Philip C. Tubeza and Alcuin Papa

CONGRESS SHOULD LEAVE THE INVESTIGATION OF alleged corruption in the Philippine Air Force to the Armed Forces leadership, two administration legislators said yesterday as the top PAF brass supposedly ordered Col. Efren Daquil not to talk to the press any further about the alleged anomalies he exposed three days ago.

Reps. Marcelino Libanan and Benasing Macarambon, vice chairs of the House committees on justice and national defense, respectively, said AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga should be given a free hand to investigate charges made by Daquil that P30 million in savings had disappeared and that high PAF officials had been getting unlawful allowances of up to P45,000 a month.

The congressmen said they wanted the AFP to conduct the probe instead of Congress to avoid politicizing the matter. However, they called on the Commission on Audit and the Ombudsman for the military to ensure that the military did not end in a whitewash.

"I believe the Armed Forces is capable and responsible enough to probe the issues raised by Daquil including the P30 million missing PAF fund and the P45,000 monthly allowance supposedly being received by PAF generals and wing commanders," Libanan said.

He said it was possible also that Daquil may have made the allegations to blackmail the AFP leadership to give him a good position after his relief last December as deputy commander of the PAF's 710th Special Operations Wing based at Clark Air Base.

"It's clearly an internal matter that must be handled by the AFP," Libanan said.

Macarambon cautioned that a congressional inquiry may only politicize the issues raised by air force colonel, who he said was "sour-graping."

The alleged gag order on Daquil was disclosed by his lawyer, Homobono Adaza, and a PAF officer who asked not to be identified because he was not authorized to talk to the press.

While Daquil had been ordered not to give any media interviews, Adaza said in a radio interview he was free to move around Villamor Air Base, including playing golf. The officer said Daquil can leave the base only if accompanied by guards.

Daquil turned himself in for investigation by the Air Force Provost Marshal last Wednesday. He was later "requested" by his superiors not to leave the compound of Villamor Air Base for his "personal security."

Air Force spokesman Lt. Col. Restituto Padilla said in a radio interview Daquil had not been forbidden to talk to the media but acknowledged that "we are requesting him" to course any further statements "through the process."

"If he will grant our request, that's good, so that we can proceed without hitches the due process that we are doing," Padilla said, referring to on-going investigation of Daquil.

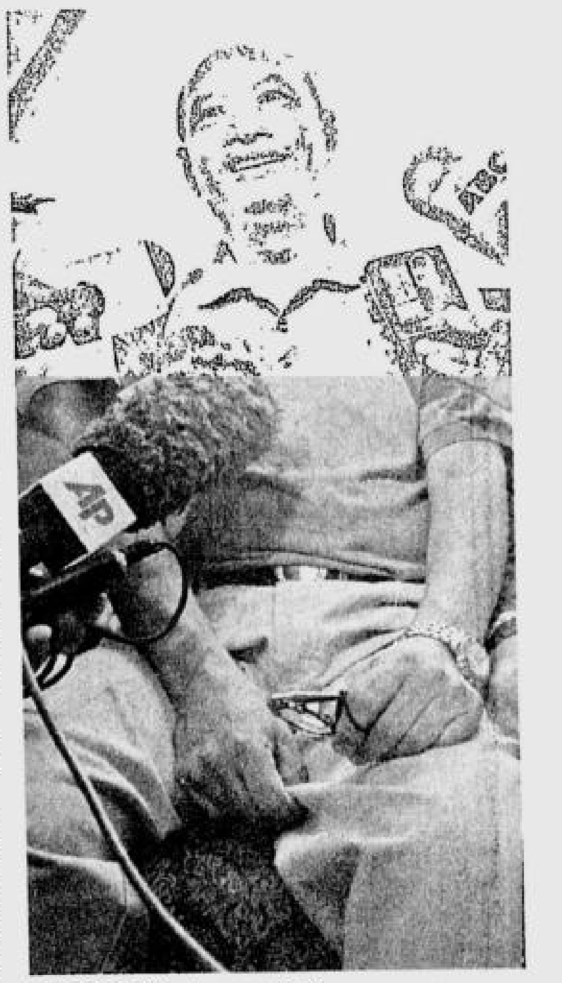
Interviewed by a television crew that chanced on him in Villamor afterward, Daquil said he wanted to be transferred to the custody of the AFP chief because he was "not comfortable" at Villamor.

Padilla said that the office of the Air Force Provost Marshal had held a "proceeding" shortly after Daquil reported to Air Force last Wednesday. Daquil was accompanied by Adaza.

Padilla also said the Provost Marshal was "wrapping up its report" and, if warranted by the evidence, Daquil would be court-martialled on charges of conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman and conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline.

Meanwhile, in Zamboanga City, two officers defended the PAF against Daquil's charges.

Col. Reolucio Samaco, deputy chief of the 3rd Tactical Operation Wing, told the INQUIRER that Daquil "could be suffering from personal problems and his allegation is unfair." *With reports from Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau, and Nikko Dizon*



DAQUIL: What gag order?

Sen. Barbers laid to rest

By Jocelyn R. Uy
and Tarra Quismundo

SIXTY-ONE BUTTERFLIES WERE released into the sky as the late Sen. Robert Barbers was laid to rest at the Manila Memorial Park in Parañaque City past noon yesterday.

Barbers' four children – Robert Lyndon, Surigao del Norte Rep. Robert Ace, head of the Philippine Tourism Authority Robert Dean and Mary Grace – said the number of butterflies represented the years their father lived on earth.

Barbers passed away on Dec. 25 of cardiac arrest after a long bout with throat cancer. He was to turn 62 on January 19.

"Good-bye, Dad," Mary Grace cried out as she freed the butterflies moments before her father's grave was sealed and as a 21-gun salute was fired in his honor.

The butterflies complemented the shower of red and white rose petals scattered by a helicopter as the dark brown coffin bearing the late senator's remains was marched on a horse-drawn caisson to the family mausoleum at the park's Sanctuary of Peace section.

President Macapagal-Arroyo had earlier offered to have Barbers interred at the Libingan ng mga Bayani in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City. But the family declined, opting to bury him at the the family mausoleum where many departed members of the Barbers clan rest. The late senator was laid to rest beside his wife's father and a grandson.

Some 500 relatives, friends and colleagues came to bid Barbers goodbye, among them House Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., his wife Gina, Senator Alfredo Lim and several police officials.

Mourners also included seven members of the The Hobbits, a group of midgets who, like Barbers, were devoted to the Sto. Niño.

"We've known him for a decade now, even when he was still a police officer at the Manila Police District," said the group's leader, Roger Morejon.

Morejon said Barbers always joined them in the annual parade in Quiapo, Manila, celebrating the feast of the Sto. Niño. "But we will always remember him. When we hold the parade on Jan. 29, we know that he will still be there acting as our guide," he told the INQUIRER yesterday.

In the latter part of the funeral rites, Philippine National Police chief Arturo Lomibao handed over a folded Philippine flag to Barbers' widow, Virginia. "In behalf of the President, we give this flag to [symbolize] the services he rendered to the country," he said.

No need for rape victim to show 'probable cause'

By Tonette Orejas, *PDI Central Luzon Desk*, and Volt Contreras

OLONGAPO CITY—THE JUDGE IN THE Subic rape case has said he does not need to have the rape victim and the four witnesses physically present in court for him to determine if there was probable cause in charging the four United States Marines and their Filipino driver and ordering their arrest.

"The records [of the case] will suffice," said Renato Dilag, presiding judge of the Olongapo Regional Trial Court Branch 73.

He cited the Section 6, Rule 112 of the Rules of Court and a Supreme Court decision on *Santos vs. Reyes* which established that a judge is not required to obtain more evidence and demand that the complainant and witnesses be presented when undertaking a judicial determination of probable cause.

The lawyers of Lance Corporal Daniel Smith and driver Timoteo Soriano Jr. had sought in separate motions that Dilag examine the victim and the witnesses because the prosecutors had not personally done so during the preliminary investigation.

Meanwhile, Zosimo Paredes, executive director of the Presidential Commission on the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement, yesterday expressed apprehension that the four US Marines may not be arraigned at all if the US Embassy refuses to hand them over to Philippine authorities even after arrest warrants have been issued.

Paredes said there are questions and legal "nuances" that needed to be addressed this early by government prosecutors to preempt "possible delaying" tactics in a case that is widely seen to be a test for the VFA and Philippine-US relations.

"You cannot have an arraignment and the case cannot proceed until the court acquires jurisdiction over the accused. But what if the embassy won't budge?" said Paredes.

"Is handing over the warrants to the embassy—even if the suspects are not turned over—already tantamount to the court acquiring jurisdiction over the accused?" he asked.

If the US merely receives the arrest warrant but does not yield custody of the accused, the warrants cannot be considered "effectively served," he said.

However, negotiations for transfer of custody could still continue at the diplomatic level, Paredes said.

Paredes said he was optimistic that the US Embassy would grant the Philippine request for custody, which the government formally conveyed last Nov. 16 but has remained unanswered.

"We have been friends for over a hundred years. How difficult would it be for them to grant this one thing that we are asking?" he said.

The VFCOM director said the embassy has agreed to let him personally see the four accused soldiers for the second time since early November.

With a report from Philip C. Tubeza

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Juan Carlos B. Robles, Partner, Punongbayan & Araullo. He has over 20 years of work experience and is a Certified Fraud Examiner and Certified Public Accountant (both in the U.S. and in the Philippines). Juancho attended fraud and investigation trainings at the USDA Graduate School and received various awards and commendations from U.S. government agencies (including the U.S. Department of Justice and the FBI) for his work against white-collar crimes and public corruption. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners. He obtained his master's degree, with distinction, from the Asian Institute of Management.

Atty. Elfren L. Meneses, Jr. , Chief Anti-Fraud Division, National Bureau of Investigation. He has 30 years of solid experience at the bureau which includes fighting real estate fraud, computer crimes, illegal recruitement, urban and other white-collar crimes.

Capt. Conrado G. Dumlao, President, Truth Verifier System. Captain Dumlao has been in the investigative and security business for 40 years, 17 of which were in the U.S. His company was awarded by the Philippine National Police as the Best Private Detective Agency in the Philippines. He is a Certified International Investigator, Certified Protection Professional, Certified Fraud Examiner and a Certified Security Professional.

Atty. Charlie C. Yalung, Partner, Picazo Buyco Tan Fider & Santos Law Offices. His area of focus includes civil, criminal, and commercial litigation involving many types of fraud such as credit card, electronic, real estate, tax, and other commercial and financial related cases.

Wesley C. Mintu, Senior Manager for Audit & Assurance, Punongbayan & Araullo. His CPA practice is both in the U.S. and the Philippines. As a certified fraud examiner, he has extensive experience in fraud examinations and litigation support. He holds an MBA degree from the Asian Institute of Management

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SC ruling to stall Naia3 opening, Solgen fears

THE SUPREME COURT RULING ORDERING THE GOVERNMENT to pay P3 billion in initial compensation to the Philippine International Air Terminals Co. (Piatco) for the expropriated Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport will only delay the facility's scheduled opening later this year, according to Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo.

In a motion for partial consideration of the SC's Dec. 19 ruling, Benipayo argued against releasing the money to Piatco until all claims of creditors against the consortium have been determined.

He warned that the government could end up assuming Piatco's liabilities, noting that Piatco was an insolvent company and because of this might refuse to pay its creditors.

"The republic faces the legal possibility of having to defend itself against the assumption of liability to creditors of Piatco whose combined claims against the latter far exceed the value of the property expropriated," Benipayo argued.

Some of these creditors were the Japanese builder, Takenaka, and Asahikosan, its subsidiary, which need to complete the construction so the terminal can be opened.

Benipayo noted that Piatco had earlier expressed a desire not to pay Takenaka and its subsidiary.

If the P3 billion is released to Piatco, the terminal would not be completed and the country could end up with another "white elephant," he said.

Benipayo said the government must have some form of security because of Piatco's financial state. *Leila B. Salaverria*

Gov't vows swift justice for press slays

THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT SAID YESTERDAY IT wants a "swift resolution" of journalists' murders, after a global press watchdog said the country was the world's deadliest place for journalists next to Iraq in 2005.

The Paris-based Reporters sans Frontieres (Reporters Without Borders) report said 63 journalists were killed worldwide in 2005 and 1,300 physically attacked or threatened, making it the deadliest year in a decade.

Of the total deaths, seven were from the Philippines, second only to Iraq, where 24 journalists and five media assistants were slain last year. *AFP*

Lanao clan war kills 10

By Alcuin Papa

A WAR BETWEEN TWO CLANS in Lanao del Sur claimed the lives of 10 persons yesterday, reports reaching Camp Aguinaldo said.

Skirmishes in Tubaran and nearby villages were still raging as of press time between members of the Kibad and Balt families and their allies on one side and the Papandayan and the Dimaporo clans on the other.

The Kibad and Balt families have been under attack from about 200 heavily armed supporters of the Papandayan and Dimaporo clans since Wednesday.

Reports said that of the 10 killed, seven were fighters from the Papandayan-Dimaporo clan downed in an ambush yesterday.

Residents in Tubaran fear the feud could lead to a full-blown conflict between government forces and the fighters of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the area.

Around 200 heavily armed MILF fighters were seen marching toward Tubaran, apparently to protect civilians.

The clan war began January 29 last year when 12 members of the Kibad-Balt families were massacred by Marine soldiers after being tagged by the Papandayan-Dimaporos as alleged bandits.

The Kibads and the Balt retaliated and killed 12 and wounded seven family members of the Dimaporos and Papandayans in February that same year.

Moro rebs support Asean tourism meet in Davao

DAVAO CITY — MUSLIM SEPARATIST rebels said yesterday they will support a meeting of Southeast Asian tourism officials and industry leaders in this city, the site of deadly terror bombings.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front said the ASEAN Tourism Forum on Jan. 13-21 in Davao City will promote the peace process to end more than three decades of fighting for a separate Muslim homeland in the south.

In a statement quoting Muhammad Ameen, secretary of the front's central committee, the rebels said MILF, "even without the request from the government or ATF, will help in whatever way to ensure the success of the forum."

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations is comprised of the Philippines, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Malaysia is brokering peace talks between the Philippine government and the MILF. A ceasefire agreement signed in 2003 has prevented large-scale skirmishes between government troops and guerrillas.

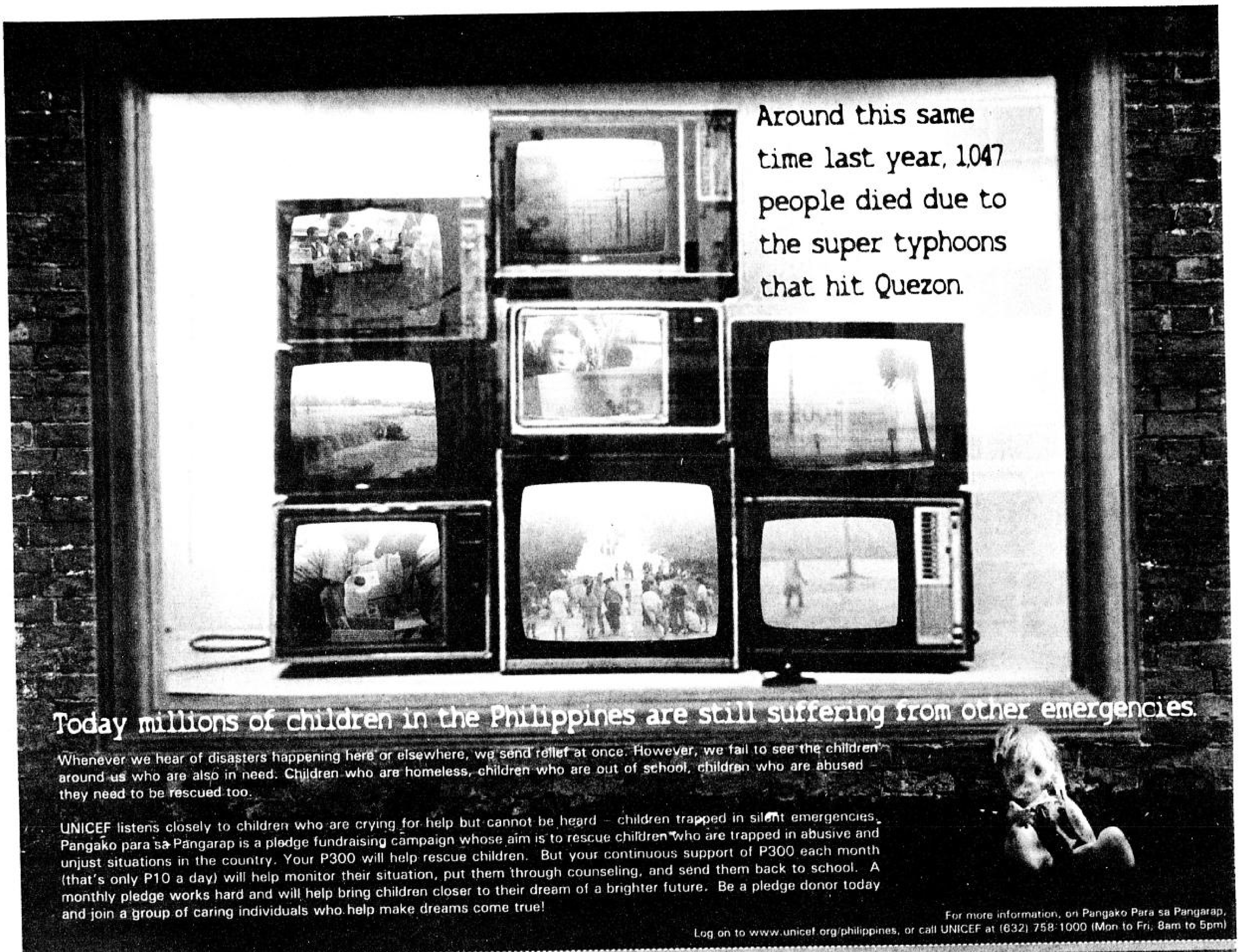
The front said the tourism forum is a "significant step in projecting Mindanao as a hub of peace and (a tourism) destination" and that it was an "indirect endorsement" of the peace talks as the "most practical and civilized way" of resolving the conflict.

The nine-day tourism forum includes talks among tourism ministers from ASEAN, China, India, Japan and South Korea. Officials from national tourism organizations, the ASEAN Airlines Association, the ASEAN Hotel and Restaurant Association and the Federation of ASEAN Travel Association also will hold meetings.

Separate bomb attacks in March and April 2003 by alleged operatives of the al-Qaida-allied Southeast Asian terror group Jemaah Islamiyah killed 42 people at the Davao airport and the local wharf. A terrorist bomb last year killed a boy at a bus terminal in Davao.

The military and police initially blamed the MILF for the 2003 bombings, but the rebels vehemently denied the allegation. They suspended peace talks until the government withdrew the charges.

The rebels later issued a statement disavowing any links to terror groups and committed to help the military hunt them down. *AP*



Around this same time last year, 1,047 people died due to the super typhoons that hit Quezon.

Today millions of children in the Philippines are still suffering from other emergencies.

Whenever we hear of disasters happening here or elsewhere, we send relief at once. However, we fail to see the children around us who are also in need. Children who are homeless, children who are out of school, children who are abused – they need to be rescued too.

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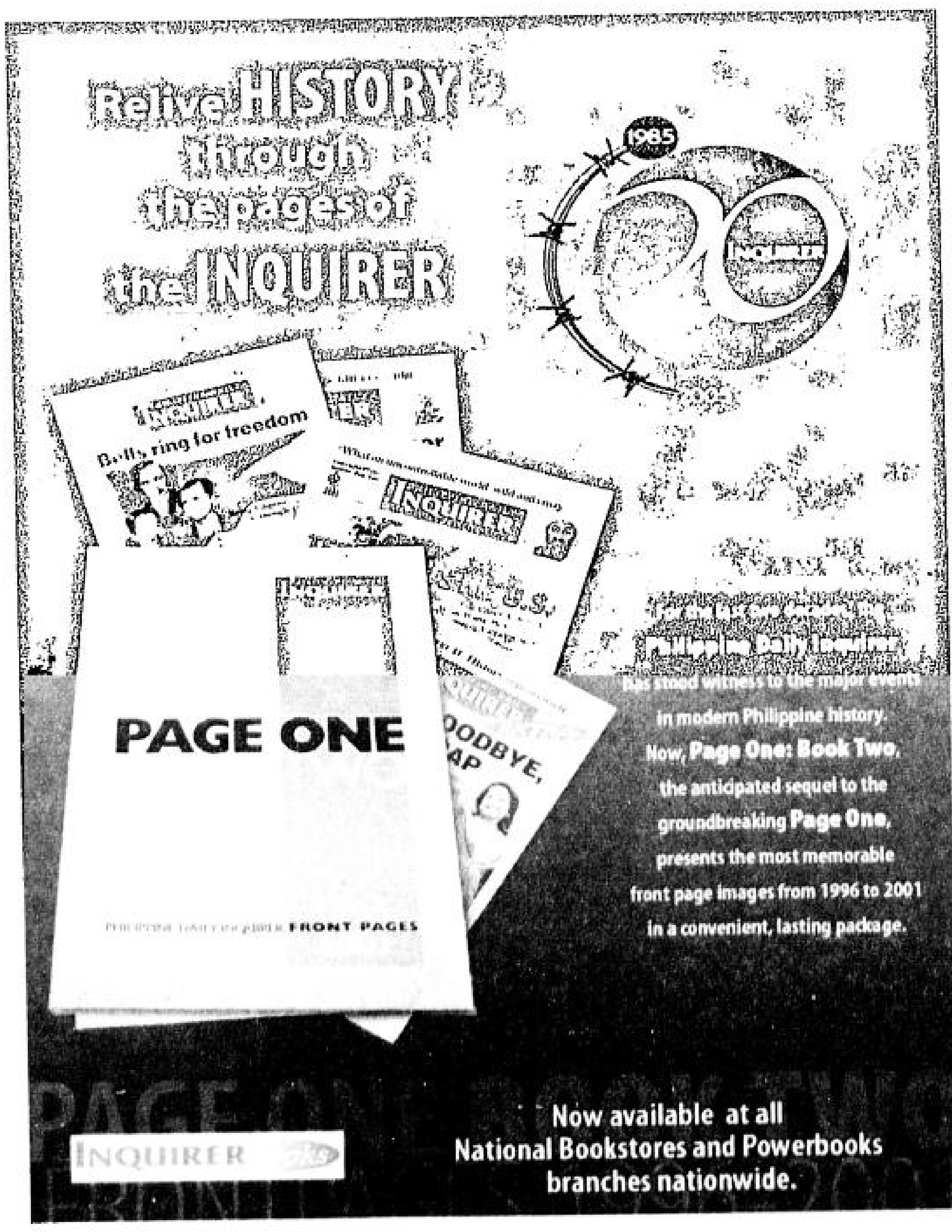

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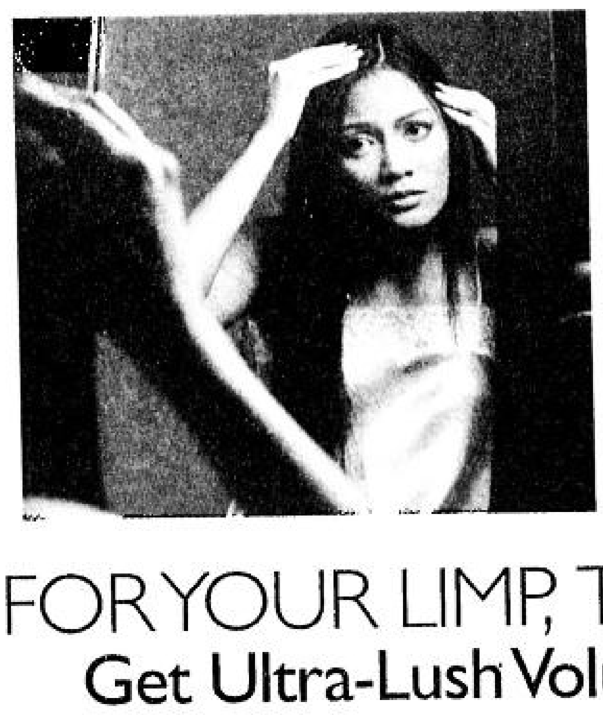

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GMA backing 'no-el,' says ConCom chair

By Norman Bordadora

THERE'S NO NEED FOR FORMER President Fidel V. Ramos to wait for President Macapagal-Arroyo's stand on the Consultative Commission's proposal to scrap elections in 2007 to set the stage for a full parliamentary system in 2010.

ConCom chair Jose Abueva said he told the former President at a meeting on Dec. 27 that Ms Arroyo had already endorsed the ConCom's proposed amendments to the Constitution, including the transitory provisions and the no-election scenario.

Ms Arroyo endorsed the amendments before the holidays when she gave Speaker Jose de Venecia a copy of the commission's proposed Charter changes for consideration by Congress, according to Abueva.

"We invited Senate President Franklin Drilon, but he did not attend the ceremony. Nor did he send a representative," he told the INQUIRER in an interview.

Abueva was referring to the rites in Malacañang during which the ConCom submitted to the President the draft of the proposed amendments to the Constitution after it wrapped up its deliberations on Dec. 15. Ms Arroyo, in turn, gave a copy to De Venecia.

"The President has, in effect, already acted on our recommendations when she transmitted a copy to Congress," Abueva said.

"I told him [Ramos] the President has already transmitted to Congress the proposed revisions of the Constitution and those include the transitory provisions (calling for the cancellation of the 2007 polls)," the ConCom chair said.

Ramos' challenge for Ms Arroyo to come out with her position on "no-el" by the New Year has given rise to speculation that he is about to withdraw his support from the President. His meeting with Drilon and former Sen. Vicente Sotto III on Jan. 2 fanned the speculation.

Abueva confirmed Malacañang's announcement that he and several ConCom leaders met with Ramos on Dec. 27. He described the meeting as a four-hour gathering "to celebrate our friendship."

Abueva said he, ConCom secretary general Lito Monico Lorenzana, and Commissioner Romela Bengzon were walk-in guests in the Urban Bank office of the former President on Buendia Avenue in Makati City.

"We already knew about his (opposition) to the no-el. In fact, he gave us copies of his statement," Abueva said.

He said he respected Ramos' position.

Abueva said Ramos explained that he never gave the President an ultimatum. "Only the media is saying that," said the ConCom chair.

'FVR only seeks dialogue'

From page A1

Barbers on Wednesday night and yesterday called Claudio, according to Bunye.

But Bunye was mum on what Ramos had told Ermita and Claudio about the Jan. 2 meeting he had with Drilon and Sotto, saying he would rather that Ramos divulge the details himself.

"If I were to give out the details of the Drilon meeting as relayed by the former President, I don't think this would be very flattering for Drilon and Sotto," Bunye said.

Drilon broke away from Ms Arroyo in July last year at the height of the "Hello Garci" disclosures that she rigged the May 2004 presidential elections. Sotto is closely allied with deposed President Joseph Estrada.

Monumental blunder

Ramos is widely credited with saving the Arroyo administration by distancing himself from calls for Ms Arroyo's resignation over the election fraud charges. Last month, Ramos called a proposal by Ms Arroyo's handpicked Constitutional Commission to scrap next year's election a "monumental blunder" and warned her to state categorically her opposition to the move.

The proposed cancellation of the 2007 election was aimed at paving the way for the shift in 2010 to a parliamentary system of government.

Although the Palace seemed upbeat on Ramos, an INQUIRER source said that Ramos met with El Shaddai Leader Bro. Mike Velarde on Wednesday at Velarde's home at the posh Ayala Alabang Village reportedly to lure him to his side and away from Ms Arroyo.

The source, quoting someone privy to the meeting, said Ramos reportedly told Velarde: "I don't like this woman anymore. Let's all be together."

The INQUIRER tried to reach Velarde for comment, but was told that he was resting with his wife. A female staff member who answered the INQUIRER call dismissed the meeting as "pure speculation."

Ramos' supposed meeting with Velarde, one of Ms Arroyo's spiritual advisers, came two days after his talks with Drilon and Sotto.

"He's doing the rounds," the source said of Ramos. "He wants to send a message to Gloria, and at the same time, he's hoping that Velarde would side with him."

Bunye said Ramos had told Claudio that he intended to attend two important meetings to be convened by Ms Arroyo this month "to show very unequivocally (his) support of this administration."

Opposition scenario

He referred to the gathering of the national directorate of Lakas on Jan. 14 and the Council of State meeting on Jan. 24. Ramos is chair emeritus of the Lakas-CMD.

In a phone interview and in a statement, Claudio said Ramos called him up yesterday to urge Palace officials to announce his intention to attend the two meetings in order to dispel speculations that he was switching sides.

"So how can he (Ramos) be planning important meetings and confirming his attendance and be conspiring with the opposition?" Claudio said.

He described as "unbelievable" and "malicious" what he said was the "scenario being foisted by the opposition on the whole country that President Ramos was getting together with them."

Claudio said it was Ramos who suggested before Christmas the convening of the Lakas caucus, as well as the meeting of the Council of State, the highest consultative and advisory body of the government usually attended by eminent leaders.

Claudio said the Lakas caucus would discuss the Charter change initiatives and come up with a common party position.

Charter change, poll reforms

In the meeting of the Council of State, Claudio said Charter change and the need for electoral reforms, among others, were expected to be discussed.

Claudio said the two meetings were set when he and Ermita met with Ramos on Dec. 27 to clear things about the controversial Charter change recommendations made by the Consultative Commission (ConCom).

"We explained to him that the President could not make an opinion on the ConCom proposals because this would preempt Congress for whom the proposals were intended," he said. "Afterward, he (Ramos) said he would just wait for the Lakas and council meeting where he has confirmed his attendance."

In a statement, Bunye said the Palace viewed Ramos' meeting with Drilon and Sotto as part of "a series of consolidation meetings in the interest of national reconciliation and healing."

"We have confidence in the leadership and capacity of former President Ramos to bring other national leaders behind a strong agenda of social reform, economic takeoff and political renewal," Bunye said.

Poisoned politics

The Palace, he said, appreciated Ramos' initiative in "forging unity and cooperation among political leaders for the sake of the country."

"It is a welcome departure from the poisoned politics of the recent past and it opens a new path to national consolidation," he said.

Asked if Ramos was important for the survival of the Arroyo administration, Bunye said: "He is a respected leader and many people listen to his advice."

Asked whether he meant Drilon and Sotto then failed to achieve their objectives in their meeting with Ramos, he said: "We'll find out."

But Bunye stressed that Ms Arroyo was on "a very sound footing."

"We can see this in the way our peso is gaining strength. Our economic indicators are very positive. This is something that will not happen by themselves," Bunye said. *With reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., TJ Burgonio and Norman Bordadora*

Erap welcomes unity with Ramos, Aquino

From page A1

Estrada is under house arrest in Tanay on plunder charges.

However, it is unclear how the three presidents could meet since Estrada is held under strict security regulations which bar him from holding political meetings and giving media interviews.

Governing council

Morales said he believed the three former Presidents could serve as senior advisers of a transitory "governing council" that could be set up after Ms Arroyo stepped down.

Ramos on Wednesday described the move as pure speculation but did not categorically dismiss it. He said Estrada and Aquino could instead join him in "trying to create a one, national Philippines."

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles said it was "very unlikely" for Ramos to enter into an alliance with the opposition, much less deal with Estrada whom he helped unseat in 2001.

"Ramos is a very respected statesman and administration ally who will never work for the forcible removal of President Arroyo," said Nograles, a stalwart of the ruling Lakas-CMD party founded by Ramos.

"But in the remote possibility that their alliance happens, the Arroyo administration is still very stable and strong enough to cope with such an unlikely event. At best, such an alliance will gain so much propaganda value and psychological advantage for the opposition forces. But surely not enough to bring her down," he said.

'Impossible dream'

Another Lakas member, Rep. Mauricio Domogan of Baguio City, said both Ramos and Aquino had proven to be a "balancing force" in the midst of the political crisis.

"Morales is in a fantasy land with his impossible dream of seeing Cory (Aquino) and FVR (Ramos) working to ease out the President in an undemocratic way. We know FVR to be a real statesman and enlightened leader of our party. He will never turn against democracy," said Domogan.

Domogan, vice chair of the House committee on constitutional amendments, believed that all issues and concerns about Charter change could be threshed out peacefully by administration allies.

"We, in Lakas and the administration coalition, have proven our unity in the various issues facing our nation. FVR will remain with us as our leader. FVR has already denied that such a meeting with Cory and Erap is in the works saying it will never happen. That alone should snap Morales and UNO out of their dreamland," he said.

Davao del Sur Rep. Douglas Cagas, an Aquino supporter, said it was unthinkable for Aquino to form an alliance with the united opposition since "she is firmly for a constitutional transfer of power."

Cagas, who was appointed officer-in-charge of Davao del Sur by the Aquino administration, said Ramos and Aquino would not want to go down in history as "pillars of an unholy alliance."

Old dragon

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero said that while the possible alliance of the former Presidents might have been discussed this week with opposition stalwarts, the UNO was not actively courting Ramos but would welcome him.

"We are open to all, " Escudero said. "The former President is already an old dragon and you cannot trick or force someone like him to do something he does not want to do."

"What's wrong if they decide to talk about what is good for the country? It's not like they're talking about coups. That would be a different matter," Escudero said.

He said a Ramos defection from the administration would give a boost to the opposition and show an overwhelming dissatisfaction with Ms Arroyo's continued rule.

Escudero noted that Ramos had been given "too much credit" last year for saving the Arroyo presidency.

"He was given credit for preserving the loyalty of the Armed Forces and saving Gloria when it was not only Ramos who stood by her," he said.

PNP loyalty

But Director General Arturo Lomibao, chief of the Philippine National Police, brushed aside speculation about where Ramos stood, saying the former President would not abandon Ms Arroyo. "So what is there to be worried about?"

An alliance of the former Presidents would not affect the loyalty of the PNP to the Commander in Chief, said Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, PNP spokesperson.

"They are outside the chain of command. We're confident of the loyalty of our people, even those who had served (Ramos)," Bataoil said. *With reports from Luige A. del Puerto and Norman Bordadora*

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Church goes on TV with own station

From page A1

ing about how the media, specifically newspapers, have been reporting about Church and religion.

Archbishops Ricardo Cardinal Vidal and Orlando Quevedo of Cotabato earlier sniped at the media for allegedly portraying bishops as divided on political issues. Others like Malolos Bishop Jose Oliveros had come to the defense of Davao Archbishop Fernando Capalla for his supposed soft and vague approach to the political crisis during his incumbency as CBCP president.

Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales and his supporters also fumed over an INQUIRER report that Ms Arroyo had surreptitiously donated P1 million to his "Pondo ng Pinoy" project. He said he had no knowledge of the donation but later admitted it went to Radio Veritas.

But TV Maria was apparently not the Church hierarchy's response to what some of its officials claim as unfair reporting by the media.

Treasures of the Church

Coronel said its programs would be geared toward promoting moral values, especially among the young and poor.

"They are the treasures of the Church," he said, noting that the youth and the poor comprise about 50 and 70 percent of the population, respectively.

For a start, programs will include family counseling and the explanation of Church doctrines courtesy of bishops and their corresponding application to the young, the CBCP secretary general said.

"We are trying to strengthen our youth because the future of the Catholic faith relies on (them)," he said,

Radio Veritas

To reach a wider audience, TV Maria and existing Catholic media outfits would promote and "synergize" one another, Coronel said.

The Church-run Radio Veritas borrows much of its credibility from its role in helping topple the Marcos dictatorship in 1986.

It was on Radio Veritas that the late Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin called Filipinos to troop to Edsa to defend coup leaders Fidel Ramos and Juan Ponce Enrile. Their defection from then President Ferdinand Marcos triggered the collapse of his 20-year dictatorial rule.

Correction

RENATO DILAG

AVELINO LAZO

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, a photo (right) that appeared in the Correction box on Page A4 is that of Olongapo Judge Avelino Lazo—not Judge Renato Dilag. At left is the photo of Judge Dilag. Our apologies.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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PNP says suspect involved in other high-profile crimes

By Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

IMUS, CAVITE—THE WAY POLICE say it, Rodolfo Cuer is a professional assassin.

Cuer, the man suspected of killing Pasay City Judge Henrick Gingoyon, was involved in high-profile crimes in Cavite, Bulacan and Las Piñas City even at an early age, said Chief Supt. Jesus Verzosa, Southern Luzon police director.

Verzosa said Cuer was only in his mid-20s when he killed Japanese businessman Uehara Tsutomo in Las Piñas two months ago.

He said witnesses—including the victim's partner, Corazon Santos—identified Cuer as the man who gunned down Tsutomo, 45, near the latter's residence.

Business rivalry was the motive in the killing, Verzosa said. He said police had information that Cuer had been hired by suspected Yakuza members.

Verzosa said Cuer and some of the men earlier arrested by police in connection with the Gingoyon murder were members of the Velazquez kidnap-for-ransom group.

He said that aside from kidnapping, the group was also into gun-for-hire activities and robbery.

According to Verzosa, Cuer was involved in at least three heists at pawnshops and a betting station for horse racing in Marilao, Bulacan, and Bacoor, Cavite, in 2004.

Cuer is also suspected to have taken part in the kidnapping of a German national in Alabang, Muntinlupa, a few years back, he said.

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MEDIA presentation at Camp Crame of six suspects in the murder of Pasay City Judge Henrick Gingoyon. The suspects stand behind (from left) PNP Chief Arturo Lomibao, Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes and NBI officer in charge Nestor Montaring. JOAN BONDOC

Cops free 5 of 11 men held in judge's murder

From page A1

tion earlier disclosed that in an extrajudicial confession, one of the suspects said he had heard from his companions "words pertaining to the mastermind."

"[But] we are not revealing that first, because it is not supported by other evidence," Chief Supt. Jesus Verzosa, chief of the Southern Luzon Police, said at the press conference.

'No definite link'

Barcena had admitted his disputes with Gingoyon, but strongly denied involvement in the murder.

Pressed to say what police had against Barcena, Verzosa would only say that the latter had some affiliation with the suspects.

"We have some information [that] Colonel Barcena was once the chief of police of Bacoor. I think you have copies of the affidavit of the late judge stating the disputes and charges and countercharges [between Gingoyon and Barcena]," Verzosa told reporters.

But he added: "There is no definite link."

Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao said the PNP considered the case "partially solved" with the arrest of the supposed gunman.

Mastermind/motive

"[But] we still have to find out the mastermind, and the motive behind the killing," he said.

Lomibao later said investigators had a possible motive and a possible mastermind, but that this information could not be divulged as yet so as not to jeopardize ongoing operations.

In Bacoor, Gingoyon's eldest child Hazel expressed the family's appreciation at the swift arrest of the suspects, but said the PNP should make sure that those arrested were not fall guys.

"We hope the justice for our father will not be an injustice to others. I am sure our father would not like it to be like that," Hazel told reporters at the wake on Wednesday.

She said the family also appreciated Lomibao's visit at the wake on Tuesday afternoon.

Speaking with Gingoyon's four children, Lomibao promised that the PNP would exert all efforts to arrest all those involved in the killing, including the mastermind.

The PNP and NBI have jointly filed murder charges with the Prosecutor's Office against Cuer; Danny Sulaiman alias Sahid Adam Sulaiman, who allegedly gave the blood money to Cuer; Rudy Baclor, whose house was allegedly used in planning the ambush and who made the extrajudicial confession; Efren Samonte, the alleged lookout; Mark "Mac-mac" Datas, the alleged driver of the getaway motorcycle; and, Filemon "Boy Negro" Rabino, who allegedly provided the murder weapon.

They are all detained at the Cavite Provincial Jail.

NBI officer in charge Nestor Mantaring told reporters that Baclor might later be recommended as a state witness in the case.

Custodial investigation

Verzosa said the arrest of those released was not unlawful.

He said the five men were not hurt and only put under custodial investigation.

The freed suspects are Tony Saban, 25; Rolly Raga, 45; Boyet Ramos, 26; Filemon Arciaga, 47, and Gregorio Ignacio, 34.

Arciaga's partner, Alicia Apostol, said she and their children were very happy to learn that he had been released.

She tearfully insisted that Arciaga was innocent of the accusation against him: "He's just an ordinary driver. If you want, you can go to our place and ask our neighbors about him."

Analyn Ignacio said she was happy that her husband Gregorio, a scavenger, had been freed, but admitted that she was still angry at those who had arrested him.

The woman and other relatives of those arrested trooped to Camp Pantaleon Garcia in Imus early on Tuesday and patiently held a vigil there.

Some of them said that despite the certain expense, they were thinking of filing charges against the arresting policemen.

Jessi Rabino said she was firm on filing charges against the police agents who picked up her husband Filemon (Boy Negro) from their house in Green Valley.

She said that all of a sudden, her husband became a suspect just because he was wearing a black jacket. *With reports from Margaux C. Ortiz and Jocelyn R. Uy in Manila*

JUSTICE IS A LADY

A TRIBUTE TO JUSTICE CECILIA MUÑOZ-PALMA FROM PRESIDENT JOSEPH EJERCITO ESTRADA

Justice Muñoz-Palma, I mourn your death.

I have lost a respected friend and the country has lost a pillar of democracy and the rule of law.

Appropriately, you were our first woman Supreme Court Justice and the shining light of the mission to craft the 1987 constitution.

I take quiet pride in having drawn you from your treasured privacy to lead the PCSO to a new plane of credibility.

I will ever cherish your few words on the events of 2001 when you challenged the opinion of the Supreme Court, as you mourned another loss: "The 1987 Constitution suffered... when the ongoing impeachment of President Joseph Estrada was unceremoniously disrupted and discontinued and the issues on hand were brought to the parliament of the streets. The Rule of Law was set aside and the Rule of Force prevailed."

Justice Muñoz-Palma, as I grieve, I am reminded of a song of decades past which you yourself may remember:

"JUSTICE IS A LADY. JUSTICE, IF YOU'RE STILL THERE, I WILL HAVE MY FAIR SHARE."

PRES. JOSEPH EJERCITO ESTRADA

Gov't checks 'rolling store' hoarding, avoids traders

From page A1

Malacañang apparently thinks so.

It has decided to give the contract to run state-sponsored rolling stores to barangay officials and community-based organizations, according to Environment Secretary Michael Defensor.

The government has been bilked by unscrupulous traders who diverted millions of pesos worth of instant noodles and National Food Authority (NFA) rice to stores and other outlets.

"We trust the barangay captains more because they show more concern for their constituents than businessmen who are just out there for the profits," Defensor said in an interview in Malacañang. .

He has been asked to explain the government's plan to sell more subsidized goods, primarily instant noodles and rice, using part of the P35 billion in savings for pump priming this year.

The President has put special emphasis on the sale of rice (at P18 per kilo) and instant noodles (at P4.25 each) because these have become the staple of poor Filipinos.

Illegal diversion

The illegal diversion of subsidized goods could have cost the government tens of millions of pesos, considering that it has spent no less than P600 million a year for the program since 2001, according to Trade Secretary Peter Favila.

Manufacturers of noodles and other basic goods sold in rolling stores such as coffee, sugar, sardines and cooking oil have been complaining that some of the discounted goods intended for the poor have found their way to *sari-sari* and grocery stores, Favila said.

Some traders running the "Tindahan ni Gloria Labandera" have resorted to hoarding most of their allocation of subsidized goods and selling them at market prices for a huge profit at the expense of the government and the intended beneficiaries.

In a statement, Malacañang said that "because government funds and logistical resources are also limited, measures have to be adopted to ensure that government subsidized rice (and other products) would truly reach their intended beneficiaries anywhere in the country."

Secret monitoring

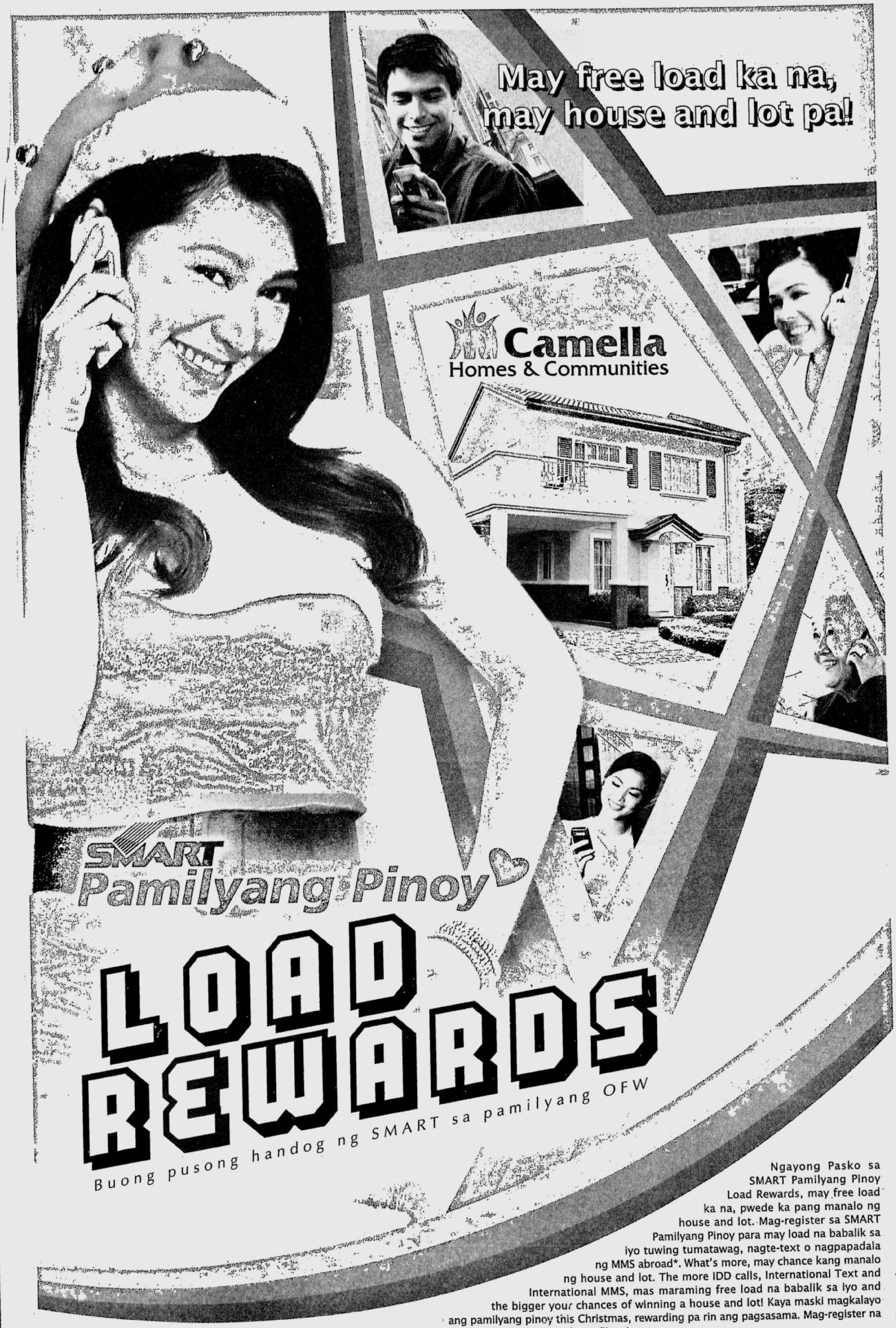
Favila said the government had adopted clandestine monitoring of the delivery and distribution of the subsidized goods and tightened the screening of beneficiaries.

In place of the "Tindahan ni Gloria Labandera" stores set on mid-sized truck, President Macapagal-Arroyo launched yesterday the first of the "Tindahang Pinoy" convenience store in Barangay Payatas in Quezon City.

Government agencies have pitched in their resources to plug the loopholes in the food retailing program for the poor.

The NFA and the Department of Agriculture have imposed strict measures on the sale of rice, while the Department of Social Welfare and Development has purged its list of family beneficiaries in select depressed areas.

The Department of Trade and Industry has been helping in the accreditation of barangay leaders and community groups that would run the state-owned convenience stores.



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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Russia, Ukraine clinch deal in gas row

BRUSSELS—THE EUROPEAN UNION VOICED ITS relief on Wednesday after Russia and Ukraine reached a deal to end their natural gas price war but warned that lessons had to be drawn from the crisis.

"We are happy that both sides are satisfied with the deal," EU Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs said before an emergency meeting of gas experts cut short by the accord clinched in Moscow.

But he told reporters: "It is clear that Europe needs a clearer and more collective and cohesive policy on security of energy supply."

Russia's state-controlled energy giant Gazprom reached an agreement overnight with Ukraine on the price Kiev would be charged for natural gas, apparently ending a crisis that has hit supplies in western Europe.

Under a five-year agreement effective from Jan. 1, Ukraine will buy gas at a rate of $95 per 1,000 cubic meters (about $2.75 per 1,000 cubic feet) from a Russia-Ukrainian joint venture, officials said.

The EU imports more than 40 percent of its natural gas, and around half of that comes from Russia. Experts predict that the Union's dependency on outside energy sources could reach 70 percent by 2020.

However the bloc's energy policy is still in its embryonic stages.

Austrian Economy Minister Martin Bartenstein, whose country took over the EU's rotating presidency for six months on Jan. 1, also said that lessons had to be learned.

"The matter is not entirely behind us. We have got to draw conclusions from this and learn how we should deal with these sorts of things in the future," he told reporters after the talks between gas experts.

"We've got to ensure security of supplies and capacity," Bartenstein said.

Piebalgs added: "As long as we spend more energy we will be getting more and more dependent, and we should be looking at the energy sources we have here in the European Union."

German Economy Minister Michael Glos, whose country is by far the biggest European importer of Russian gas, said he hoped the "regrettable" row had been "settled once and for all."

Italian Foreign Minister Gianfranco Fini also welcomed the deal and the "sense of responsibility of the two countries."

Fini, who had called without success on the EU to mediate in the dispute, said he hoped the agreement would "contribute in a decisive way to the stability of the European energy market."

Bartenstein said Russia would remain a major supplier of gas to the EU but that the dispute had highlighted the supply problems facing Europe.

"Russian gas will remain one of the backbones of European gas supply, to be the backbone for Austrian gas supply," he said. "But certainly gas supply security in general is an issue in these days and months."

The meeting of gas experts was called a few days before Gazprom turned off the gas taps to Ukraine after it refused to accept an immediate four-fold hike in prices, apparently to bring it into line with the European market.

But as supplies were cut on Sunday, supplies bound for several European countries across Ukrainian territory also began to dwindle, amid accusations that Kiev was siphoning it off.

Representatives from Gazprom and Ukraine's Naftogaz had been due to take part in the meeting in Brussels but finally did not appear.

Bartenstein said the crisis would focus the EU's energy policy, which is currently the almost-exclusive domain of the Union's 25 member states.

"We have had a decade of liberalization, of improving competition and now we will focus more on supply security and a new definition of the kind of energy mix we want," he said.

His country's foreign minister, Ursula Plassnik, said it was "in the immediate interest of all European countries to find common solutions and projects to guarantee long-term security in energy policy." *AFP*

India takes census of threatened tigers

MUMBAI—ARMED WITH RADIO collars and high-tech cameras, hundreds of wildlife experts fanned out across a vast mangrove in India's east on Thursday as part of the world's largest census of the endangered tiger.

Alarmed by reports of large-scale poaching in India's famed tiger sanctuaries, about 250 officials used speedboats or walked through muddy creeks and marshland looking for tell-tale footprints, or pugmarks, in West Bengal's Sunderbans, the world's largest natural tiger habitat.

"This census is the world's biggest and the most scientific to date," Pradeep Vyas, the census chief, told Reuters from the Sunderbans, a 10,000 sq km (3,900 sq mile) sparsely populated mangrove marshland on the eastern coast.

Conservationists, who have been highly critical of India's efforts to protect the tiger, have also expressed reservations over the accuracy of the pugmark system, saying the method has in the past masked the big cats' dwindling numbers in the country's national parks.

In March, the Indian government was criticised after reports said the entire tiger population of up to 18 animals at the Sariska tiger reserve, one of the nation's most prized reserves, had been killed by poachers and that numbers across the country had fallen rapidly.

In response, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh formed a special taskforce to suggest ways of saving the big cats.

For the first time, the latest tiger census will use specially designed computer programmes, camera traps and radio-collars tracked by satellite to avoid any duplication in recording pugmarks.

The last census in 2003 estimated there were between 260 and 280 tigers in the Indian part of the Sunderbans, home also to hundreds of saltwater crocodiles and rare river dolphins. *Reuters*

SIBERIAN tiger, Serge, 11, shows his teeth at the Little Rock Zoo, Jan. 2, in Little Rock, Ark. AP

Largest cats

THE LARGEST OF ALL CATS, the tiger is one of the most fearsome predators in the world. It can weigh up to 450 kg and measure around three meters from nose to the tip of the tail.

- Tiger numbers in the wild are thought to have plunged from 100,000 at the beginning of the 20th century to between 5,000 and 7,000 today. They now range in the forests of south Asia, southeast Asia, southeastern China and the Russian far east. Fewer than 1,000 tigers are in zoos worldwide.
- A century ago, there were some 40,000 tigers in India.

Now, officials estimate there are about 3,700 although some environment groups put the number at less than 2,000.

- Three tiger subspecies—the Bali, Javan and Caspian—have become extinct in the past 70 years. The five remaining subspecies—Amur, Bengal, Indochinese, South China and Sumatran—live only in Asia, and all are threatened by poaching and habitat loss. The South China tiger is on the verge of extinction, with just 20-30 estimated remaining in the wild. *Reuters*

BIRD FLU OUTSIDE S.E. ASIA

Turkish teener dies after brod succumbs

ANKARA, TURKEY—A SECOND Turkish teenager who tested positive for bird flu died early Thursday, the semiofficial Anatolia news agency reported.

Fatma Kocyigit died in a hospital in the eastern city of Van, four days after the death of her 14-year-old brother, Mehmet Ali Kocyigit, Anatolia said.

Preliminary tests have confirmed both cases as bird flu. If they are as confirmed as being from the deadly H5N1 strain, they would be the first human fatalities outside southeast Asia in the current outbreak.

Ahmet Faik Oner, the doctor who was treating the siblings, said the girl died at 6:30 a.m. on Thursday morning, Anatolia reported.

Seven other patients with similar symptoms were being treated at the hospital. They include another girl from the Kocyigit family, also suspected of having bird flu, who is in serious condition, Oner said on Thursday.

The Kocyigit children helped to raise poultry on a small farm in the eastern town of Dogubeyazit, and were in close contact with sick birds.

Health Minister Recep Akdag, speaking late Wednesday, did not say if Mehmet Ali Kocyigit had died from H5N1. The samples would be sent to a British lab for further tests on Thursday morning, he said.

Akdag contradicted a ministry statement earlier this week that said the boy's death at a hospital in southeastern Van province on Sunday was not caused by bird flu. Akdag said authorities repeated the test in two separate laboratories following an autopsy on the boy.

"There are two cases that have been confirmed as positive by the laboratory," Akdag said. "Another case is suspected of being positive."

"We have a pandemic plan ready," Akdag said. "There is no need to be too alarmist." *AP*

More than 50 dead in new Iraq violence

BAGHDAD—A SUICIDE BOMBER blew himself up in the middle of an Iraqi funeral procession on Wednesday, the bloodiest in a string of attacks across the country that left more than 50 people dead and scores more wounded.

The bomber, wired with explosives, walked up to a group of about 100 Shiite mourners burying the victim of a drive-by shooting in the small town of Mukdadiyah, about 100 kilometers northeast of Baghdad.

He detonated his bomb at the graveside killing 37 people and wounding 45 others in the deadliest suicide attack since Iraq's parliamentary election on Dec. 15.

The funeral was for a bodyguard who died overnight after being wounded in an attack Tuesday on a local official of the Dawa party of outgoing Prime Minister Ibrahim Jaafari.

A young girl also died in the shooting although the target of the attack survived. The official, Ahmad al-Baqa, was at the funeral and again survived.

Security forces immediately cordoned off the town as families rushed to its overcrowded hospital looking for relatives.

Army medics were drafted in to help treat the wounded.

In other violence, at least two car bombs exploded in the capital.

One blew up outside a police precinct issuing identity cards in a Shiite neighborhood of north Baghdad. Five people were killed and 13 wounded. *AFP*

Dubai architect becomes ruler after emir dies

DUBAI—THE MAN WHO TRANSformed Dubai from a dusty Gulf city into a glitzy metropolis took over as ruler of the booming emirate, succeeding his elder brother who died on Wednesday.

The UAE's defense minister and world renowned racehorse breeder Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum succeeded Sheikh Maktoum bin Rashid al-Maktoum, who was also vice president and prime minister of the United Arab Emirates.

The elder Maktoum died in Australia on Wednesday. He was in his early 60s and had suffered heart problems.

"The UAE has today lost a historical leader who dedicated his life to building the nation and doing good for its people," a statement from the UAE presidency said.

The UAE is a federation of seven emirates which include Dubai. Each emirate has a separate ruler and heir apparent, who preside over a local government.

Internationally, the brothers had been well known as co-owners of Dubai's Godolphin stables which competes in major horse races. The younger brother was the more high profile of the two in racing circles and spent several weeks a year in Britain.

At home, the elder Maktoum maintained a low profile, preferring to allow his younger brothers to run the day-to-day affairs of Dubai, the Gulf region's trade and tourism hub.

The new ruler has been credited with presiding over Dubai's transformation into a hub for trade, finance, property and tourism—marked by opulent shopping malls and futuristic architecture—to wean itself off dwindling oil reserves.

The capital Abu Dhabi holds most of the oil wealth of the UAE, a member of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

Economists said they did not expect Sheikh Maktoum's death to impact Dubai's booming economy.

"I don't see too many changes. In recent years his (Sheikh Maktoum's) role was very limited as an active maker of policy," said Simon Williams at the Economist Intelligence Unit. "His brother Sheikh Mohammed has been the real driving force."

The UAE's main stock markets halted trading after the news was announced. The Dubai Gold and Commodities Exchange said it would close for a week from Thursday.

Officials said UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed al-Nahayan would also soon appoint a new prime minister and vice president for the Gulf Arab state to succeed Sheikh Maktoum.

Sheikh Maktoum's body would arrive in Dubai for burial on Thursday, Dubai's official WAM news agency said. The UAE declared 40 days of mourning and state institutions will close for a week.

Condolences poured in from leaders around the world. German Chancellor Angela Merkel said the country had lost a friend.

Egyptian Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif will attend the funeral.

UN chief spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said in New York:

"He will be remembered for his many years of visionary leadership, which helped build stability and prosperity in the UAE in the midst of dramatic developments in the Gulf region as a whole." The UAE has been a major donor to the Palestinians, whose Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei said: "He always supported our Palestinian people and their right to establish an independent state whose capital is Jerusalem."

Organizers of one of Dubai's main tourist attractions, the Dubai Shopping Festival, said all festivities related to the one-month event would be cancelled. DSF started on Wednesday. *Reuters*

SHEIKH Mohamed bin Rashed al-Maktoum

AFP

Sharon fights for life after brain hemorrhage

From page A1

the country into turmoil barely three months before a general election that is likely to determine the future of Middle East peacemaking.

The fate of the hawk-turned-peacemaker is widely expected to have far-reaching consequences for the Middle East peace process.

The 77-year-old Sharon, dubbed "the Bulldozer," underwent seven hours of surgery before doctors were able to halt bleeding in his brain. But he remains in critical condition.

Doctors called a halt to an initial bout of surgery after six hours, but Sharon had to be readmitted to the operating theater for another hour when complications arose.

SHARON is shown in this handout photo released by the Israeli government press office in 1978 when he was agriculture minister.

Severe but stable

"Prime Minister Sharon is in severe condition (but) he is stable," Shlomo Moryussef, director of Jerusalem's Hadassah hospital, told reporters.

Moryussef said Sharon had been transferred from the operating room to the neurological ward after a scan confirmed that the bleeding had stopped.

Two of Sharon's closest allies—Transport Minister Meir Sheetrit and Ronni Bar-On, the leader in parliament of the premier's Kadima (Forward) party—both confirmed the gravity of the situation by saying the prime minister was "fighting for his life."

The powers of the premier, who is seeking reelection in a nationwide poll scheduled for March 28, have been transferred to Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

Sharon's admittance came hours before he was due to undergo a procedure to repair a small hole in the heart to prevent a repeat of a minor stroke he suffered on Dec. 18 last year.

End of Sharon era?

Sharon's precarious state of health will upset all previous predictions of the outcome of the election in which Kadima had been expected to romp to victory, with commentators already declaring an end to the Sharon era.

Officials, however, dismissed any suggestion that the election be postponed.

Sharon's second stroke also comes amid rising chaos in the Palestinian territories ahead of a Jan. 25 legislative election.

Sharon fell ill while he was at his ranch in the southern Negev desert. He was admitted to the hospital just before 11 p.m. (2100 GMT).

Olmert told an emergency Cabinet meeting that it was important the country did not come to a standstill.

"We are all praying for the prime minister. We are living with a difficult and complex situation but the government is functioning and Israel is functioning," said Olmert.

Overweight

US President George W. Bush, who urged the overweight Sharon to go on diet after his first stroke, sent his prayers to the man he hailed as "a man of courage and peace."

There was also a get-well message from Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qorei who offered his prayers and "great concern."

Sharon has already announced his intention to serve a full term by which time he would be 82 and by far the oldest prime minister in the history of the Jewish state.

However, commentators said it would be virtually impossible for Sharon to now realize his dream of a third election victory.

"Even if he does recover, he will have a very hard time convincing the public of his ability to serve four more years, after undergoing two strokes in two and a half weeks," wrote Haaretz columnist Aluf Benn.

"One can cautiously say that it appears that the era in which Sharon stood at Israel's helm came to a tragic end on Wednesday."

Don't mess with us

Sharon's spokesperson Ranaan Gissin said Israel's enemies should not seek to exploit the turmoil, warning Palestinian militants and the Lebanese militia Hezbollah "not to entertain any notion that they can start any escalation."

"This is not the time to mess with us," said Gissin.

But the Islamist movement Hamas shed few tears for its arch-enemy, with its chief spokesperson Sami Abu Zuhri declaring that "the world is on the verge of being rid of one of its worst leaders."

Few of Israel's prime ministers have left such a mark on both the military and political landscape as the controversial Sharon over the last half a century.

Sharon, who transformed himself from an ultra-hawk to a man regarded as a peacemaker, and his party have been riding high in the opinion polls. The Kadima is forecast to emerge as the largest party after the election.

Son faces prison

Although Sharon has been able to attract other heavyweights such as Olmert, the Kadima is seen as largely a one-man band with few concrete policies or party institutions.

Sharon has been under huge stress in recent weeks, not least with the prospect of his son Omri facing prison after he pleaded guilty to charges relating to allegations of illegal financing of one of his father's leadership campaigns.

Sharon has also had to face the prospect of a resumption of full-scale Palestinian violence after the armed factions called off a truce in the countdown to the election in the West Bank and Gaza. *AFP*

Poor girl finds, returns P300,000 …

From page A1

very well have changed her life as she knew it.

But the idea of making off with the money just did not occur to her. "*Hindi naman sa akin 'yun, e* (But it's not mine)," she said shyly during an interview near the makeshift family home in Quezon City.

Against the advice of neighbors, Cristina decided that the money would be returned to its owner, who, as of yesterday, was still unknown.

GMA 7 reported later last night that Cristina had turned over to the rightful owner, a messenger.

Motorcyclist

Cristina said she picked up two wads of P1,000 and P500 bills tied together with rubber bands, as well as a handful of checks, at about 7:20 p.m. the other day along T. Gener Street in Barangay Kamuning.

She was chatting with a friend when she saw the money fall out of a man's bag as he was speeding past on a motorcycle, she said.

Family members had been keeping mum on the exact amount in order to keep false claimants at bay. (According to other reports, the stash is worth P420,000.)

Cristina said the man wore a helmet. Family members said they could identify him by asking for details about the cash and checks issued by various banks.

Three persons had approached the family, each claiming the money.

But the family wanted to be very sure about the windfall, which was in the safekeeping of Jie and Bong Mateo, Cristina's aunt and uncle.

No way

Neighbors had urged Cristina to split the loot with them, but she was firm: The cash and checks should be returned to the man.

She said it would be a pity if the man were fired because of the lost money.

It was not the first time that the girl returned something of value that she had found. Last year, she returned about P5,000 to a newspaper vendor; in 2004, she also gave back about P1,000 to a tricycle passenger.

Ironically, Cristina was once accused of filching a few pesos from the sale of snacks at the school cafeteria even though the charge was largely unsubstantiated, Luzviminda Bugayong said.

The mother said she was very proud of her daughter's honesty. But she confided that the first thing she did on seeing the money was to touch the bills—just to know how such a big amount "felt like."

By Luzviminda's own estimation, the money can help the family start a *sari-sari* store.

But this believer in karma said there was no way they could have kept the money: "*Di natin alam kung ano ang magiging kapalit* (We don't know what the cost will be)."

Rough times

A neighbor, Marie Mateo, said the Bugayongs were going through rough times, sometimes skipping meals because they had no money. Relatives often had to help out by giving them food, she said.

The father, Cesar, is out of work.

Luzviminda helps out at a canteen that prepares meals for a few offices, and takes in wash on the side. She makes about P2,000 a month at the canteen, and P250 a week for the laundry jobs.

Cristina is the sixth child in a brood of eight, with ages ranging from 22 to 5. Only Cristina and 10-year-old Nerissa are in school because there is not enough money for the rest, Luzviminda said.

The mother said Cristina did not excel in academics, but that she made up for it by always going to school and studying her lessons.

"*Matiyagang matuto* (Diligent in learning)" was how Cristina's adviser, Joynalyn Isip, described her to reporters.

When the subject of a reward finally came up, the girl could only say: "*Nasa kanya na 'yun* (That's up to the man)."

Reward from mayor

Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. said he had sent Councilor Ariel Inton Jr. to determine the needs of Cristina and her family.

"It's just right to reward that kind of behavior," the mayor said.

He added that the city government would give Cristina a plaque of recognition, and that a scholarship program for her was being considered.

Councilor Edcel Lagman Jr. said he had drafted a city resolution commending Cristina for her honesty.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, January 6, 2006
Before Epiphany
André Bessette

1st Reading: 1 Jn 5:5-13
Gospel: Mark 1:7-11 (or Luke 3:23-38 or 31-34, 36, 38)

He preached to the people saying, "After me comes one who is more powerful than I am; I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit. As for me, I am not worthy to bend down and untie his sandals."

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth, a town of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And the moment he came up out of the water, heaven opened before him and he saw the Spirit coming down on him like a dove. And these words were heard from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved, the One I have chosen."

Commentary

Jesus is making his appearance, known as the son of Joseph in a long line of believers in the covenant of God with his people. But it is John the disciple who tells us who this Jesus truly is—this man is the favor of God, God's Son who has life. There is the testimony of water, blood and the Spirit. And we have known all three in our lives: baptism, confirmation and eucharist, and so have this life within us. We are called to believe: to live with all our being, witnessing to the power of life and the presence of God among us. We overcome the world with life!

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To the Devotees of the SACRED HEART OF JESUS. TODAY IS THE FIRST FRIDAY of the month. Novenas to the SACRED HEART OF JESUS and to ST. ANTHONY are given away. Please get them from JASMINE at the Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City.

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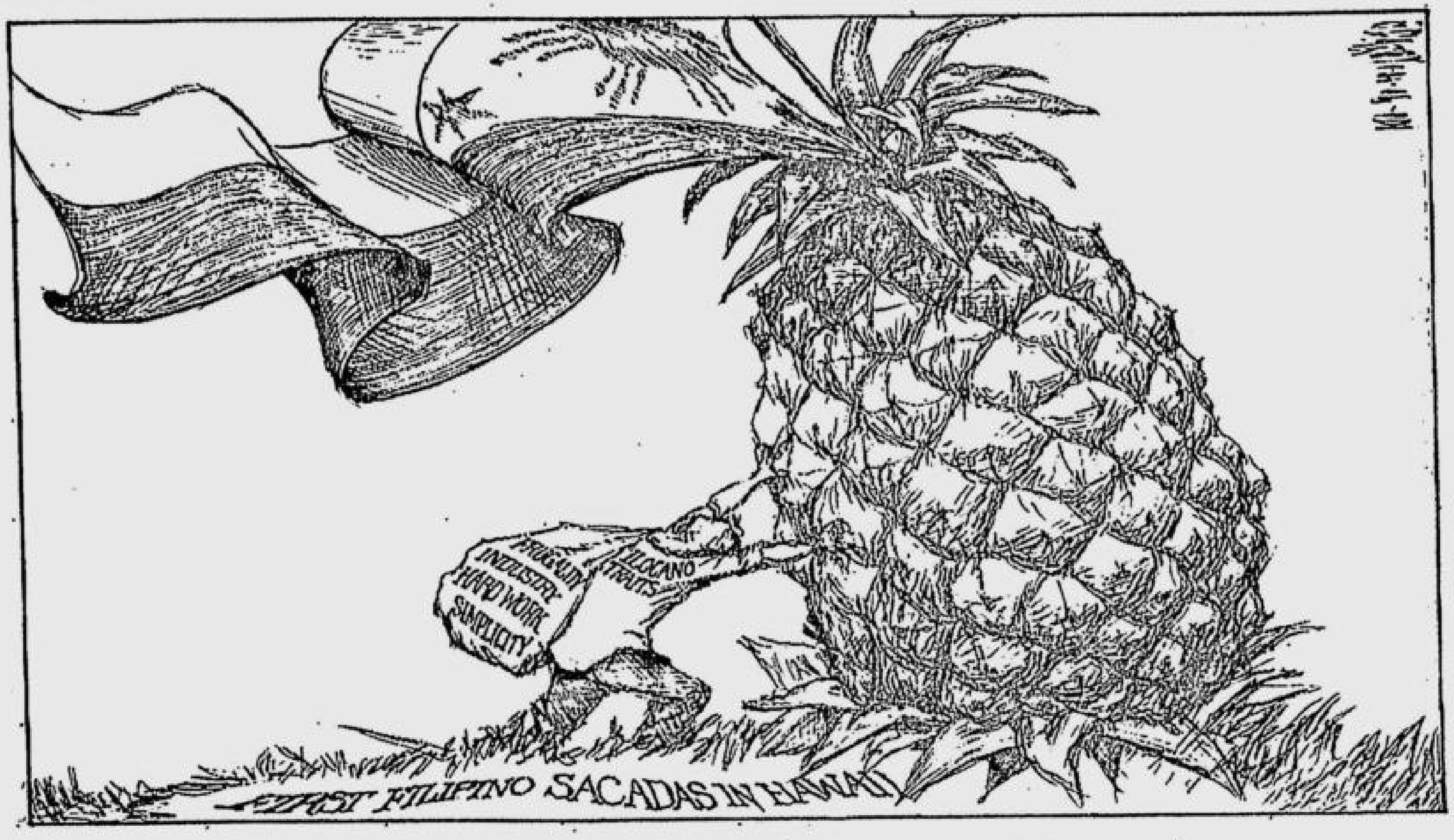

Wink, wink

EDITORIAL

FIDEL V. RAMOS HAS RAISED WINKING TO AN ART form. No president in our history has been as coy in public. Or as flirtatious. Today, a mad scramble is taking place to divine where the former president's affections really belong. Ramos himself has helped things along by sending mixed signals.

First, he had a picture taken on Dec. 27 with Chair Jose V. Abueva of the Constitutional Consultative Commission, Secretaries Eduardo Ermita and Gabriel Claudio, and Commissioner Carmen Pedrosa. Ramos was grinning from ear to ear, and giving his trademark thumbs up—mere days before the deadline he gave to President Macapagal-Arroyo to reject a proposal to cancel the 2007 elections. Today, of course, the administration cites the photo as evidence that everything is hunky-dory between the President and her predecessor.

Then, early this week, Ramos had a meeting with former Sen. Vicente Sotto III and Senate President Franklin Drilon. Wine, it was said, was drunk. Beyond that, everyone involved remained uncharacteristically tight-lipped.

Ermita, who took part in the late-December photo-op (preceded by a four-hour meeting), loftily spun the meeting as Ramos' way of bringing back erring politicians to the administration's fold. "Given the mental frame of former President Ramos, we would like to think that even if we do not know what they talked about, he will always work along the national interest and if any, I'm sure that President Ramos will play a unifying role in the government. I don't think it was a meeting where people might think that maybe he was being convinced to join the cause of the opposition or vice-versa," he said.

Then from the camp of former President Joseph Estrada came noises to the effect that it would be wonderful if the three living former presidents got together. For what? One Estrada loyalist, former Agrarian Reform Secretary Horacio Morales, said it might be a sign that the three leaders were preparing to meet, but added the he didn't know actually what Ramos, Drilon and Sotto had discussed.

Pressed, during a television interview, to state categorically whether he was for or against the administration, Ramos snapped, "C'mon."

Ferdinand Marcos loved to say the same thing. "Aw, c'mon" was a characteristic Marcosian expression of skepticism. And apparently it is one of his cousin's favorites, too.

Talking—and winking—is cheap. But what does the public really know about what Ramos has been up to? Not much. He seems dismissive of Morales' hopes about the three former presidents combining forces. Indeed, how can they possibly unite? Ramos would have to go to Aquino, since she preceded him to the highest office and and was once his commander in chief; and then together, Ramos and Aquino would have to see Estrada, which Cory may be able to swallow, but surely not Ramos.

The closest the media have come to extracting from Ramos a hint of where his real affections lie was when he said on the same TV show: "You want me to join you? Why don't you do something better? You join me in trying to create a one, national Philippines." That seems to suggest that he is less interested in an alliance and would prefer a coronation.

A story, which may or may not be true, provides some useful clues about his plans. Prior to the political crisis in July, it is said, Ramos was a lonely man, starved of attention, with barely a flunky or two willing to accompany him on his golf games. After he helped save the President, observers began to marvel at how large, and adoring, Ramos' golfing retinue had become. It was as if, said one, he were president again.

Of one thing the public can be sure: the former president's golf buddies today must be legion. Everything he is currently doing only helps to ensure more games, more sycophants, more junkets, more media attention.

Is this a case of "pride goeth before the fall"? Or does Ramos really have something up his sleeve?

But isn't that exactly the point of Ramos' exertions these past days, to keep people guessing and therefore keep them thinking he matters? For now, the man who is not famous for betting big, seems to have bet the farm—on the incumbent, who obviously has a different schedule for stepping down from the one he has put forward.

The poor prefer jobs, not food handouts

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

THE INQUIRER REPORTED EARLY THIS WEEK that two of President Macapagal-Arroyo's closest allies and most ardent defenders, former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano and Rep. Prospero Pichay, are urging the reopening of the Election Returns (ERs) to prove that she did not cheat in the 2004 elections. I have written a number of columns urging the same, and I am glad that at least two of GMA's allies share the same view. Pichay even echoed this column's argument that since the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET) is already recounting the ERs for the vice-presidential candidates, because of the electoral protest of opposition candidate Loren Legarda against Vice President Noli de Castro, it might as well do the same for the presidential candidates whose votes are written on the same ERs.

It would be sensible for GMA to follow the advice of Garci and Pichay—if she really did not cheat, that is. GMA's guilt or innocence can be gauged from how she reacts to the proposal. If she did not cheat, she would immediately endorse the proposal and have a petition filed with the PET to that effect. But if the suspicions that she and Garci cheated were true, she would either keep quiet or put up excuses for not reopening the ERs.

So we would know whether GMA is a bogus President or not by how she treats the proposal of her two allies.

Come to think of it, Garci is supposed to be GMA's partner in crime in the alleged cheating. So, why would he urge the reopening of the ERs if he knows they cheated? Is this just another trick in the labyrinthine saga of the Garci tapes? Is this a result of their desperation to put behind the questions about her legitimacy? Or does Garci really believe that reopening the ERs will prove definitely that GMA won "fair and square" and therefore erase all doubts about her legitimacy?

On the other hand, why did GMA's allies in Congress reject all efforts to reopen the ERs in places questioned by the opposition? If Congress did not railroad her proclamation, there would be no doubt about her presidency now. And had the PET not dismissed outright the election protest of Susan Roces, substituting for her dead husband, Fernando Poe Jr., there would be no doubt as to who is the president now—if GMA did not cheat. And if the House did not throw out the impeachment case, there would be no suspicion whatsoever.

But because GMA's allies used technicalities and their superiority in numbers to thwart all efforts for a fair hearing of the election results, she is now reaping the whirlwind. One cannot help but suspect that there was skullduggery behind all the efforts to block the reopening of the ERs. The suspicions will not go away until she proves definitely that she won without cheating. And the efforts to get her out of Malacañang will not cease until the end of her term unless she erases all doubts that she is the rightful President.

The only way to do that is to reopen the ERs.

* * *

The President announced with much fanfare in greeting the New Year that she would allocate P35 billion as food subsidy to the poor. She did not say where the P35 billion would come from, except the vague assertion that it would come from "savings." If there were such savings, why were many infrastructure projects halted for lack of funds? Why have thousands of teachers, war veterans and other government employees not received the remuneration due them? Why is the government not paying its obligations to contractors and suppliers if there is enough money?

But assuming she would be able to scrape the money for the food subsidy, is this a wise way to use this much money? The poor need jobs, not handouts. They would be much happier working for their food rather than receiving them like beggars. Handouts fill their stomachs but rob them of their dignity. Handouts promote a culture of mendicancy. Get the people used to eating handouts and they will see no need to work or even to look for jobs. Why bother to work when you can eat without working anyway?

This culture is now becoming evident in families with members working abroad. Family members here who receive money from their OFWs regularly don't bother to look for jobs anymore. They just wait for the monthly handouts from their relatives abroad.

The amount of P35 billion is a lot of money coming from the pockets of taxpayers. Couldn't it be put to better use by generating jobs for the poor? Then the money is recycled for more productive pursuits. Spend it all for food subsidy and it goes one way into the stomach and then to the toilet. No productive chain reaction except perhaps babies.

Unfortunately, that is the only way the President knows how to stop the plunge in her popularity rating. This is now a policy of her administration: indirect bribery. That was how she made administration congressmen block the impeachment case against her. That was how she made local government officials support her in the impeachment fight. That was how she made all of them support Charter change. And that is how she plans to pull herself out of the hole where the popularity polls have dumped her.

And that is why the government is going bankrupt despite squeezing the people for more and more taxes. (Prices will go up again this month as she raises the expanded value added tax to the maximum 12 percent. That's her New Year's gift to the people.)

Tinkering with free speech: the latest con

Passion for Reason

Raul C. Pangalangan

THERE IS ONE MAJOR CHANGE THAT SEEMS to have been smuggled into the draft revisions of the constitution. The new draft, while purporting to reiterate the freedom-of-speech clause, adds an innocuous-looking word. "No law shall be passed abridging the **responsible** exercise of the freedom of speech, of expression, or of the press …." Who after all can object to the requirement that rights be exercised responsibly? Isn't that one of those motherhood and apple-pie statements, like Miss Universe contestants gushing, "I wish for world peace"?

Hold your horses. Adding the word "responsible" may seem like an innocent admonition in a Sunday homily, in a grade-school parent-teachers' meeting or, come to think of it, in a family planning seminar. But when it is added to a constitution, nay, to the Bill of Rights, you must recall the classic advice of the all-time greatest US Chief Justice, John Marshall, "It is a constitution we are construing." And he concluded: "The power to [regulate] includes the power to destroy."

The settled rules of constitutional exegesis affirm the power of the word—every clause must be given effect—as well as the power of history—the literal text yields what history beckons.

Commissioner Sergio Apostol explained on ANC the other night that the clause was just hortatory (my word, not his), and that it is more of an appeal to media practitioners to behave themselves. In that case, the constitution is not the place to do it, and the word "responsible" is superfluous, the lawyer's version of "*borloloy*."

But the best proof of the peril of constitutional superfluity is that the Constitutional Consultative Commission itself saw fit to eliminate one such seemingly harmless word from the 1987 Constitution, dropping the word "duty" in the definition of judicial power.

The 1987 Constitution has the following paragraph in laying down the power of the courts: "Judicial power includes the duty of the courts of justice to settle actual controversies involving rights which are legally demandable and enforceable …." Now, now, who can object to such a bland formula? Blandness after all has its virtues. But then it also has its mischief.

The aim of the founding fathers was benign: they felt that the courts during the Marcos years were so supine and malleable, and deferred too much to Malacañang. To stop the courts from washing their hands when faced with crucial cases, it was argued by former Chief Justice Roberto Concepcion, one of the 1987 drafters, we must make it both a power and a duty to decide cases.

But words take a life of their own when they are written into a constitution and left to the courts to interpret, and the unintended result, according to Justice Florentino Feliciano, was to push the courts into the "uncharted waters of social and economic policy-making."

The recent constitution drafters seem to agree, and will now drop the "duty" clause altogether. Yet having discerned the accidental vice of the word "duty," they unwittingly sin anew and add the word "responsible" elsewhere.

The real danger now is what meanings history will beckon. Remember GMA's Calibrated Preemptive Response in hosing down peaceful ralliers, that has been chastised by the Human Rights Commission's Purificacion Quisumbing. Just imagine what wickedness the authors of the CPR can do with the "responsible speech" clause.

The website of the Consultative Commission contains reader-friendly summaries of the proposed reforms. Significantly, the commissioners do not consider this amendment one of the "highlights" of their work. If they considered it unimportant, then they do not understand how constitutions work and how words can very well alter the balance of powers in our political democracy.

There is actually nothing original in saying that rights must co-exist with responsibility. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights closes with a separate article saying: "Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible." But remember that the Declaration actually begins by saying: "Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law."

The proposed draft lays the groundwork for curtailing human rights, and will push us to what the Universal Declaration calls our last and final recourse.

* * *

One year ago, I put in a good word for Pasay City Regional Trial Court Judge Henrick Gingoyon who was hearing the airport expropriation case (Naia "Taking": Wise or Simply "Wais"?, PDI, 1/21/05). I said that I didn't know him and had never met him, but felt that he had been unfairly criticized by government lawyers for ordering the state to pay up before it confiscated private property. He then e-mailed me a touching thanks, saying that, not being computer savvy, he had to ask his young son for help to send me the note, "the first e-mail letter I have ever written." In December 2005, after almost a year, the Supreme Court upheld the correctness of Gingoyon's orders. I noted the vulnerability of the "solitary judge [who] has to bear the full brunt of public pressure, and he can do so only with personal strength and confidence in the correctness of his rulings. …. Some have been assassinated, praised as 'heroes' in death but without the support and encouragement they could have used in life."

I condole with the family he leaves behind, and offer my prayers in their time of grief.

* * *

Comments to passionforreason@gmail.com

Contradictory interests and objectives

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE CONSPIRATORIAL ATMOSPHERE OF CAPItal city politics thickened this week with the report that former President Fidel Ramos, Senate President Franklin Drilon and former Sen. Vicente Sotto III met in the Urban Bank penthouse office of Ramos in Makati last Jan. 2.

The purpose of the meeting remains undisclosed. All three have been evasive about the agenda, although they have not denied it. However, the ambiguity was sufficient to whip up speculations over their purpose. Their political backgrounds served to heighten speculation that the meeting could signal a new push to revive the failed effort to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The meeting broke the Christmas holiday lull, during which the media were contented to report soft news, and the speculation did not make up for the lack of hard news.

The heightened media interest over the event only proves that no matter what they say about Ramos being a thing of the past, his actions make good news and he is still the hottest man in the news, sometimes eclipsing the President as a newsmaker despite the advantage of the presidency as a bully pulpit. It would be dangerous to write off Ramos as a political force or as a political ally.

The ostensibly non-event of a meeting at the Ramos office has also served to reinforce public perception that he has remained a potent kingmaker and powerbroker—a role he played with considerable savvy as the savior of then President Corazon Aquino from numerous military coups and recently of President Arroyo from the collapse of her government following the Cabinet defections of July 2005.

The fact that he convened the Jan. 2 meeting confirms that Ramos holds the political initiatives that can create options for the resolution of the current crisis of the Arroyo government, that he is playing his cards well and that the media, always in search of a good story in the absence of hard news, are playing into his hands.

The hardest part of the meeting story is that it was held. Everything else is background. For example, a story is being made out of the following elements:

First, only two weeks ago, Ramos denounced Ms Arroyo for committing a "monumental blunder" in backing the proposal of the Constitutional Consultative Commission to cancel the 2007 elections and give her a guaranteed term up to 2010, in the transition to the shift to the parliamentary system. He went on to give her an ultimatum to reject the proposal or else he would withdraw his support from her. The ultimatum has the ring of political blackmail that Ms Arroyo cannot dismiss out of hand.

Second, Drilon is being pushed by the Black and White Movement, our equivalent of the post-US Civil War Ku Klux Klan that terrorized the emancipated blacks and the Yankee "carpetbaggers" in the reconstruction of the South, for transitional president, in the event of Ms Arroyo's removal.

Third, Ms Aquino, a leading figure in the Black and White Movement, has called for the resignation of Ms Arroyo. She is reported to be pushing for Drilon as transition president in case of a snap election, an event that would be possible only if both the President and Vice President Noli de Castro step down.

Fourth, Ramos has called for an early exit by Ms Arroyo (by 2007 if the shift to the parliamentary system takes place following the holding of parliamentary elections in 2006).

From the above facts, it may be argued that Ramos and Drilon, acting as proxy for Ms Aquino, share a common objective in cutting short Ms Arroyo's stay in office.

Fifth, the third participant in the meeting was Sotto, a supporter of former President Joseph Estrada. This brings Estrada into the picture, which only makes the conspiracy scenario convoluted. For what interest of Estrada is served in such a plot to topple the Arroyo government? It is not what he gains in a successor government.

The alleged plot took a harder form after former Agrarian Secretary Horacio Morales, an ally of Estrada, confirmed that an embryonic United Opposition, composed of sectoral organizations, had met last mid-December to consider plans to form a coalition among the three ex-presidents that would put pressure on Ms Arroyo to step down, after street actions demanding her resignation during the past six months have failed.

But Morales, who is more of a theoretician than a pragmatic strategist, assumes that "if we get these three national leaders, I think it's a very symbolic situation where we have the three former presidents joining forces." Such a coalition "will really add power and fuel to the (resignation) movement," he has said.

The three are presumed to have power bases: Ramos has significant influence in the Armed Forces and is chairman emeritus of Lakas-CMD. Ms Aquino is believed to have retained much of her popularity, although this appears to have been eroded in the current crisis. Estrada is presumed to have remained popular with the masses.

"You can imagine if three former presidents take the same position. How can the (people) ignore that?" Morales said. "Being former presidents, (they) have a very direct connection with the greater majority of the people."

Question: How does one mesh the contradictory objectives and political interests of the three ex-presidents who have incompatible ideological orientations?

No wonder, Ramos, a political pragmatist, has reservations. "There is no way that will happen," he said. Morales' plan is "based on speculation, rumor and their own scenarios ... there is nothing to that."

Still, all these plans boil down to one option: resignation. They have blasted all hopes that a fresh wind of change will blow in 2006.

Thinking about 'medical tourism'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

ON ONE HAND, THE BOOM IN "MEDICAL tourism" could stem the tide of the medical diaspora which has seen Filipino doctors not just leaving the country for more lucrative practices abroad, but even abandoning their medical training to "re-train" as nurses, for whom there is greater demand abroad.

On the other hand, since the great majority of medical tourists come to the country for cosmetic surgery or high-end procedures like heart bypass surgery and organ transplantation, the few doctors who do choose to stay on would most likely opt for these lucrative specialties, even as the great majority of the Philippine population lack even the most basic health care.

On one hand, medical tourism could restore the reputation for excellence of Filipino doctors and other health personnel. With doctors and allied health personnel striving to meet the higher standards of care in keeping with the stringent requirements of foreign medical tourists, the entire nation could only benefit from the services of a better-trained and regulated health corps.

On the other hand, the country's present health situation—with health services polarized between a high-quality but expensive private sector and an affordable (if not free) public health system that however is not really accessible nor of any quality—could only grow worse with medical tourism driving a bigger wedge between the "haves" and "have-nots."

On one hand, medical tourists could also encourage owners of hospitals and other tertiary health institutions to remain competitive by maintaining their facilities, upgrading their equipment and keeping up with the latest developments in research and technology.

On the other hand, the pressure to meet the market demands of medical tourism can only result in even greater emphasis on building bigger and more expensive hospitals, with perhaps government money even going to the construction of "medical centers," which could put the edifice complex of the infamous Imeldific to shame. This would only draw attention and money away from primary health care—which the majority of Filipinos really need—and which require no infrastructure other than small health centers, passable roads, clean water, skilled birth attendants and proper nutrition.

* * *

WHAT should be obvious from this "on one hand…on the other hand" listing is that the prospects and challenges of riding the medical tourism wave, which has already crested in neighboring countries like Thailand and Singapore, cannot be viewed from a simple "black-and-white" perspective.

Medical tourism is neither completely evil nor completely harmless. What's needed at this point, as the tourism department and the department of health gear up to meet a rising demand for local health services from abroad, are clear policy guidelines that would minimize the negative impact of medical tourism while keeping the focus on the real health needs of the people.

One of the possible ways of mitigating medical tourism's less savory effects on the local health situation would be the imposition of a special tax on profits made from medical tourism. The tax money should then go to the training of "poor but deserving" health personnel who will in turn have to commit to serving disadvantaged communities for a minimum period, as well as to the provision of primary health care in the poorest areas.

* * *

A STORY right next to that on the "medical tourism boom" shows the way to go for poor communities.

The story features the recent graduates of a three-week training program for community health workers, also known as "barefoot doctors." As the accompanying photo shows, many of the graduates indeed trod the ground on their bare feet, as they are members of indigenous communities, for whom medical care, as one of the participants noted, is "very little if not nil."

Though they cannot conduct operations or even diagnose serious illnesses, the "barefoot doctors" receive enough training to perform basic first aid, diagnose simple ailments and basic diseases, spot the signs of health trouble that may necessitate referral to a trained doctor, and advocate for good "health-seeking behavior" among their neighbors.

Surveys conducted over the last few decades have shown that this is the kind of basic health care that the majority of Filipinos need—but which is available to too few, such that too many of our countryfolk, especially children, die from simple, treatable diseases and ailments.

* * *

PERHAPS what we need at this point is to promote another kind of "medical tourism," with doctors and nurses based abroad or even in urban centers, paying regular visits to underserved communities around the country, making sure the poorest Filipinos get to see a doctor at least once in their lifetime.

Even better, these "visiting" doctors could be convinced to stay for even longer—through a system of incentives or recognition—either to serve communities directly or train young practitioners or "barefoot doctors" who could then provide long-term quality care.

A word of caution, though, about "medical missions" which involve lightning visits, some of which last only a few hours or a day, by teams of doctors, nurses and other health caregivers who provide free consultations and services to folks in a particular area.

Though these missions do take care of patients with acute conditions, they also serve to undercut the practice of permanent health care providers, such as midwives and small clinics. Too often, the missions end up creating a "mendicant mentality" among the poor, who choose to wait for the sporadic and rare medical missions rather than to prioritize regular visits to the clinics or adopt preventive health care strategies.

Latin America at a crossroads

COMMENTARY

Raúl Alfonsin

LAST YEAR WITNESSED A DECISIVE TURN IN Latin America. A growing number of countries in the region now seem determined to pursue their interests regardless of what the United States desires.

José Miguel Insulza's election as secretary general of the Organization of American States, in which he defeated the candidate supported by the Bush administration, emphatically demonstrated the decline of America's continental leadership. The United States not only lost control of the OAS, which generally serves US interests, but also failed to persuade the 2005 Summit of the Americas in Mar del Plata, Argentina, to endorse unanimously a declaration supporting US economic and political positions in the region. That setback was all the more striking, given that the summit was structured to defend and promote US positions.

Attempts throughout 2005 by the Bush administration to discipline Venezuela's government also failed. President George W. Bush was simply unable to get other governments to back the policy of isolation that he sought to impose on President Hugo Chávez's administration.

America has also been frustrated in its effort to obtain regional support for its policy of direct involvement in Colombia's internal strife.

Of course, not everything is going against America. The election of the Colombian Luis Alberto Moreno as president of the Inter-American Development Bank had clear US backing. This means that the bank is likely to continue its orthodox, neo-liberal policies.

But a clear line in the sand has been drawn between Latin American countries that want to pursue regional integration on their own terms and those that favor hemispheric integration under US direction.

Led by Brazil and backed above all by Argentina and Venezuela, the first group's project is the construction of the Community of South American Nations. The Mercosur countries—Brazil and Argentina, plus Paraguay and Uruguay—seek the defense of their respective national interests and a more just and democratic international order: they are not looking for a confrontation with anyone.

In the second group—the countries that pursue a direct relationship with Washington—there are two trends. Some countries, such as Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, act individually, while others, notably the Central American countries and the Dominican Republic, act from a regional perspective. All of them are in line with the policy already initiated by Mexico and, to a lesser extent, by Chile.

But it is the ideological picture that presents the starkest contrasts. Indeed, there could be political consequences affecting the entire region if the confrontation between Venezuela and the United States worsens, and if Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional wins an electoral victory in Nicaragua. The United States is likely to consider the eventual formation of a triangle linking Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua as a direct threat to regional stability, putting Latin America dangerously atop the Bush administration's security agenda. The triumph of Evo Morales' Movimiento al Socialismo in Bolivia will only fan this anxiety.

To be sure, one should not view Latin America in 2005 only in terms of the region's relations with the United States. There are also deep concerns about the internal situation in many countries that suffer almost permanent political and institutional crises, such as Haiti, Ecuador and Bolivia. Unfortunately, the structural causes that originated these crises won't begin to be resolved this year.

Indeed, local problems are likely to exacerbate regional tensions. In 2005, Chile and Peru faced off over their maritime border. In Bolivia, there are mounting revanchist pressures for recovering sea access, which was lost to Chile in the 19th century, and to use gas exports as a pressure point. The dispute between Costa Rica and Nicaragua over navigation on the San Juan River and the heated jurisdictional arguments between Colombia and Venezuela also help raise regional tempers.

All these tensions pose the threat of a new arms race, and this at a time when the region's worst problems are poverty, inequality and the marginalization of indigenous people. If these problems go unattended, destabilization will undoubtedly grow.

Finally, massive migration is contributing to the region's anxieties. The problem is not just illegal migration to the United States. Migration, triggered by dire economic conditions—and, especially in the past, large-scale violence—is also occurring between Latin American countries. Keeping the movement of people peaceful will pose a serious challenge to the region's leaders in the months and years ahead.

Throughout Latin America, if poverty and violence are not ameliorated, tensions are bound to grow. The region is truly at a crossroads. The new year may well determine whether it lapses back into the sad days of the chaotic past or finds a new maturity to strike out—in conditions of liberty and democracy—on its own path to growth and stability.

Project Syndicate

Raul Alfonsin was Argentina's first democratically elected president after the fall of its military dictatorship.

Tunnel vision

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE WE ASKED EACH OTHER: IS there light at the end of the tunnel? It's a metaphor for our situation, the feeling that we're groping around in despair, in the dark.

In the last few weeks, the Arroyo administration's been doing a bit of this hope-mongering: We are told that thanks to the wisdom of the President and her economic team, we are moving forward economically, the best proof being the strengthening of the peso.

Apparently healthy

I don't know, but I feel very uneasy about the way the peso's going. If I may use a medical metaphor, we have an "apparently healthy" peso, but that description actually has very negative connotations in the medical world.

We hear of patients who go to the doctor for a consultation because they're not feeling well. The doctor will order a battery of tests and will not find anything wrong. The patient may suddenly collapse, coming up with very serious problems, maybe even dying.

The term "apparently healthy" is used in retrospect to describe these patients when they first came in. In many of these cases, the patient did in fact have hidden problems which couldn't be detected—congenital defects in vital organs like the heart, for example, or some chronic ailment, including cancers, that had been growing through the years but that still escaped diagnosis.

I can't help but compare the peso to an "apparently healthy" patient. The "patient" does have complaints, but the doctor (the government) dismisses these as trivial. And I'm afraid that one day we'll all wake up to find the patient has taken a turn for the worse.

What are some of the danger signs we're seeing?

Think of the seafarer remitting about $1,000 a month. At its strongest last year, the peso-dollar exchange rate broke the P56 mark. Right now, government officials are proudly proclaiming the exchange rate could reach P51. What would that mean for a family depending on the seafarer's remittances? That's P5,000 less a month. That's loose change for the President and her economic advisers, but amounts to the monthly mortgage the family is paying on their house, or a semester's tuition.

For relatives who use the money for business, that reduction of P5,000 can mean even greater opportunity losses because it's P5,000 less capital. A few weeks back, former Socio-Economic Planning Secretary Cielito Habito wrote in his INQUIRER column about the dollars coming in through overseas workers' remittances, but not being spent. I see the dollar influx—which is mainly responsible for the amazing fluctuations in exchange rates—not as a sign of confidence in our economy but of overseas workers being worried about their families, and the families here hanging on to their dollars and dinars and yen, keeping it for rainy days ahead rather than investing them in business.

More cheap imports

On a macro level, the low exchange rate will have even more dire consequences. We bring in fewer dollars through our exports as the peso "strengthens." Meanwhile, our imports become "cheaper." I don't mind if it means cheaper books, but what we'll have is an even greater flood of cheap imported food, clothing and electronics, which will further kill our local industries.

I worry, too, about how the earnings of overseas workers go toward these imports. It's already been happening the last few years—just look at returning overseas workers lugging all kinds of electronics purchased abroad. Those dollars never make it into our economy.

Then they come home, and spend more dollars at the duty-free shop. And after settling in, they buy more imported stuff. I saw this recently with someone returning from Japan. Within two weeks of her return, she had spent P40,000 on *pasalubong*, gifts for relatives, and because she had come in from overseas, she had to buy imported stuff.

A "strong" peso weakens an economy like ours, where we need export earnings, and by export I don't just mean semiconductors and garments but our "people" exports, the overseas workers. A "strong" peso weakens our economy as well because we are so addicted to imported stuff, which becomes dirt-cheap, and which leads us to spend more to support other countries' industries, rather than our own.

Back to the tunnels

This takes me back to the point of tunnel vision. People with tunnel vision only see the light at the end of the tunnel. They rejoice prematurely, probably even becoming reckless as they try to make their way to the end of the tunnel. That light "blinds" them to the realities: that making it to the end of the tunnel depends on many other factors that relate to the tunnel itself, for example, the strength of the walls, the presence of other obstacles within the tunnel, perhaps dangers like pits and chasms, maybe even wild animals (read currency speculators in the case of the peso).

This diagnosis of an apparently healthy peso comes from economists who subscribe to neo-liberal "free market" perspectives in economics. Leave the currencies on their own and never mind possible long-term adverse consequences.

China is an example of a country that goes beyond tunnel vision, resisting the pressure to have a "stronger" renminbi. After months of pressure from countries like the United States, China compromised last year by allowing the renminbi to go from a dollar exchange rate of 8.27 to 8.10, a very cautious float.

The Chinese know they need to continue to bring the dollars through their exchange rate, and to keep imports a "bit" more expensive. As an example, once when I was looking for an electric shaver in Shanghai, a department store clerk brought me two Philips shavers: one cost the equivalent of P500, the other P3,000. They looked exactly alike, and the clerk explained that the cheaper one was made in China while the other one was imported. Then he brought out even cheaper shavers, with Chinese brand names.

I was amazed to hear a Chinese official on BBC the other day, explaining the basis for their economic policies. He said China recognizes it will continue to be a "less developed" country for the next 50 years. Their government's policy is to keep going at their present pace, making sure they can provide for their citizens during this next half-century, with hopes that by the next century, China would be a prosperous nation.

We stand to learn from the Chinese. There's humility, recognizing realities and limitations, as well as confidence as they set their sights all the way into the next century.

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Come clean on the purges

GREGORIO "KA ROGER" ROSAL, speaking for the Communist Party of the Philippines, admits that the CPP had indeed violated Robert Francis Garcia and Rogel Navarro during the communist anti-infiltration campaign that claimed thousands of lives. (PDI, 12/11/05) Rosal also admits that the CPP failed to act on the wrongdoings of its operatives Kenny and Dex. But, unfortunately and contrary to Rosal's claims, not "everything regarding this matter has already been answered by the party."

Had it been, the CPP itself would have informed Weng Libre that CPP members killed his mother and father because they were falsely accused of being spies. Had it been, Jun Valmoria would not have had to travel all the way to Manila from Bukidnon to recover the bones of his younger brother Ben-Art, also falsely accused, killed and left in an unmarked grave to be lost forever.

If it is true that the CPP has a policy to inform the families of its victims, why did Libre, Valmoria and scores of others have remained clueless about their lost loved ones for two decades? If indeed such a policy exists, the CPP should explain why it has been selective in the application of the policy.

Meanwhile, the Partido ng Manggagawang Pilipino (PMP), a CPP breakaway group, should explain why it has stonewalled, deceived, misled and, to this day, refused to help the family of Josemari Enriquez recover his bones. After many years, countless meetings and money spent on an exhumation in 2001—that led only to tears of frustration—Josemari's kin still has nothing but the PMP's empty words and promises.

Finally, the CPP needs to explain why its political and ideological interests have to ride roughshod over everything else, including the quest for justice for its victims. "It's sad that they are once again bringing up this issue to put the party in a bad light in the wake of the forthcoming anniversary," Rosal said. If he genuinely believes this, then, indeed, it is sad—nay, tragic—that the CPP, for all its claims to ideological supremacy, still misses the point that we are not concerned about the CPP, its image or the light under which it is seen. We are concerned about:

1. Identifying and naming all of those killed in the anti-infiltration campaigns, from the earliest to the latest.
2. Locating and reclaiming the remains of those who were killed, reuniting them with their families and according them proper burial.
3. Finding justice.

If the CPP and the various splinter groups, such as the PMP, the Marxist Leninist Party of the Philippines (MLPP) and the Revolutionary Proletarian Movement of the Philippines (RPMP), want to truly correct mistakes and put the ghosts of the victims to rest, they must all make a clean breast of it by seriously acting on the above.

Let the CPP, in marking its 37th anniversary, not just celebrate its triumphs; let it also remember those it had killed, and atone for their deaths by meeting our demands.

—JOYCE ENRIQUEZ-SIERRA,
member, Peace Advocates for
Truth, Justice and Healing (Path)
Council of Leaders,
c/o 45 Matimtiman St,
Teachers Village, Quezon City

When children become a sorry mess

I HAVE BEEN WRITING GOVERNMENT offices to bring their attention to various concerns, but I have yet to hear a response. Perhaps, I will have better luck after raising this matter in the media.

Last Dec. 22, while some teachers from the UP Integrated School and I were on some back roads of Rizal, on our way to Laguna, we saw a lot of children—boys and girls, including a number of very young ones—begging for coins. This was a scene for several kilometers. It was very much reminiscent of what we saw in lahar-affected areas many years ago. The children would run after coins dropped by passing motorists, oblivious to other cars, trucks and the dangers they got themselves and other motorists into.

One need not actually go as far as the hills of Rizal and Tanay. In the Cainta junction, motorists are harassed by children, who go through the motions of cleaning their car windows.

True, there is much poverty in our midst these days and we must do what we can to help. But what really bothers me is the seeming inaction of our local authorities. *Kung dito sa* "local" *na* level *eh walang nagagawa, paano pa kaya sa mga mataas na* "level" *ng ating pamahalaan* (If nothing is done at the local level, the more that nothing can be done at the higher lever)? No wonder we are in such a sorry mess.

—CHO ENRIQUEZ,
choenriquez@yahoo.com

Confusing response

WE WISH TO REACT TO LITO David's letter titled "For our children's sake." (PDI, 12/17/05) He didn't know what to say to his daughter who asked him why Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo remains in office despite all the allegations of fraud, cheating and corruption that have been and are being hurled at her.

Rather than just replying with a shrug, as he said in his letter, he should have told his daughter that GMA remains in office because the allegations against her remain precisely just that—allegations which have to be proven. After scrutinizing these allegations for six months, the opposition has not been able to present solid evidence against her. And following the rule of law in our country, she should be presumed innocent.

The charges are not reason enough for her to be taken out or to resign from the presidency. David's shrugging will just confuse the child; a specific answer as we proposed above will enlighten her. We feel that doing the latter will create a more conducive atmosphere for raising our children to become more responsible citizens.

We can also see that with or without the cooperation of opposition members, GMA is moving on and doing her job as President. Let our democratic institutions take care of putting a closure to these allegations.

—GEORGE U. LORENZANA,
gourmasia@yahoo.com

No Cojuangco buyout of AZ

WE WRITE IN RELATION TO THE news report titled "Cojuangco company to invest P30B in 3G network." (PDI, 11/23/05)

We would like to categorically state that Antonio Cojuangco is not in any way connected to AZ Communications Network Inc. We take particular exception to the baseless statements reported in the news item, linking Cojuangco to our company and pointing to Adelaida Zaragosa as having sold her stake in the corporation to Cojuangco.

For purposes of clarification, please note that Cojuangco has never been connected in any manner to AZ Communications Network Inc. and Zaragosa continues to be a shareholder of record of the company up to this time.

—FELIZARDO P. DELA MERCED,
president,
AZ Communications Network Inc.,
2/F DPC Place Building,
2322 Chino Roces Ave.,
Makati City

As I have pointed out in previous stories, the group of Antonio "Tonyboy" Cojuangco has officially denied it has anything to do with AZ.

I spoke with a member of the staff in one of the offices at DPC Place. Even that person had the impression that AZ Communications is owned by Mr. Cojuangco. Some staff members at the National Telecommunications Commission refer to AZ as a Cojuangco company.

Of course, the incorporation papers at the Securities and Exchange Commission still named Adelaida Zaragosa as the owner of the company, which is why I always use the words "linked" and "associated" when referring to Mr. Cojuangco's purported ownership of AZ.

—CLARISSA S. BATINO,
PDI reporter

Best use of coco levy funds

ARCHBISHOP GAUDENCIO ROSALES has asked the press to also report about the good that is happening in the Philippines to give a more balanced picture of our country, and enhance its image here and abroad.

One relatively unreported news is about the wonder fuel—coconut methyl ester (CME), or more popularly known as coco-biodiesel—which, like the virgin coconut oil (VCO), comes from the Philippine "tree of life" and is proudly Philippine-made.

Extensive tests done by authorities have shown that this wonder fuel, when blended 1-2 percent with fossil diesel, can increase a diesel car's mileage by 10-40 percent, reduce toxic emissions by 50-80 percent, make oil change necessary only after 25,000 km, give more power and pep to the engine, make the engine run smoother and quieter, and thus prolong engine life. Partas Bus Line, with its fleet of 150 coaches, projects a potential savings of P62 million a year from the use of coco-diesel blend.

Biodiesel, of which coco-biodiesel is among the best—if not the best—has in fact been extensively tested abroad and is widely used in the United States, Japan, Thailand, Austria, Germany and many other countries. And we are proud to say that our very own Philippine-made CME has passed and surpassed all their standards.

God has blessed the Philippines with many things, including the coconut tree, which provides a living for 3.5 million coconut farmers, and their 25 million dependents. Our country supplies 60 percent of the world's coconut oil. But alas and alack, we have not managed this resource efficiently, and the only ones getting rich from this resource are people from other nations, definitely not the coconut farmer. If we manage our coconut oil the way the Opec countries manage their fossil oil, then perhaps our country will not have to struggle with its crushing debt burden and economic woes.

Why not use, then, the billions in coconut levy funds to set up an efficient and effective infrastructure that will make us produce and use coconut products—CME, coco flour, VCO, coco-charcoal, coco soaps and shampoos, coco fiber, coco coir, etc.—instead of importing foreign substitutes from other countries, thus draining our precious foreign reserves and benefiting in turn producers from other countries? (President Macapagal-Arroyo and her economic managers should take note.)

Our country imports around 70 billion liters of oil every year. The use of CME will decrease our dependence on imported oil and save precious foreign exchange of around $500 million annually.

On the other hand, 75 percent of pollution in Metro Manila, the second most polluted metropolis in the world, comes from vehicle emissions.

And so I urge my brother Filipinos to use CME (and VCO). It is good for our diesel engines, our pockets, our health, our environment and our country. Bless God for giving us the coconut tree!

—SAMUEL YAP,
118 Granada St.,
San Antonio Heights,
Sto. Tomas, Batangas

'Boulevard of broken dreams'

FOR THE PAST 30 YEARS, MY family and I have been commuting between Manila and Naga City in Camarines Sur. We celebrated when the Quirino Highway was completed some years back, because what previously took 10-12 hours of intense, careful driving was cut down to an 8-hour easy drive. Unfortunately, the highway deteriorated very quickly with ever-lengthening road slips and "half-roads."

This December 2005, the highway was in its worst-ever state of disrepair, such that our trip took longer than if we had taken a PNR Bicol "Bagal" train, or if we had taken the old route. Cracks, ruts and craters marked whatever remained of the road. No wonder so many have been injured and killed on this highway. It took almost half a century to build Quirino Highway, named after the country's second president. Yet, it took less than five years for this vital artery to Bicol to disintegrate.

We were dumbfounded by reports that Public Works Undersecretary Salvador A. Pleyto is "pleased" with the state of the highway ("DPWH maintains Manila South Road," 9/11/05, DPWH website), and that Quezon DPWH's engineer Ronnel Tan had denied the road's poor condition. We saw for ourselves how the so-called permanent engineer and crew "maintained" the road by futilely pouring hot asphalt on huge cracks.

Rains may have caused the highway's deterioration. But its condition is also a good indication of the level of corruption in this country. If we were to judge the politicians in charge of the Quirino Highway in the Quezon and Bicol provinces, they would be as washed out as that short-lived thoroughfare.

Rep. Rolando Andaya is in charge of appropriations. How can he bear to leave that rutted stretch in Camarines Sur, named after his late father, unattended? How can Rep. Lorenzo "Erin" Tañada III, dishonor his late grandfather's name with huge billboards announcing a Tañada as being in charge of the repair and rehabilitation of the worst roads in Quezon province in the last 30 years?

If President Macapagal-Arroyo is indeed bent on ending corruption in the country, she should take the road trip to Bicol and feel for herself the real state of the nation's roads. As for us, we are taking the longer but car-friendlier route through Camarines Norte back to Manila rather than risk our tires, axles, lives and limbs in the "boulevard of broken dreams" that all of the corrupt politicians have made of Quirino Highway.

—DOODS AND SOL SANTOS,
doodsantos@yahoo.com

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Town tells 350 Clark firms: Pay taxes

By Jun Malig
PDI Central Luzon Desk

MABALACAT, PAMPANGA—IN AN UNEXPECTED turn of events, the local government here has asked some 350 business locators inside the Clark Special Economic Zone to pay their business permits and local taxes beginning Jan. 1 this year.

They cited as legal basis of the move the Supreme Court's resolution in March last year that nullified the tax incentives of business locators inside the economic zone.

This town's move came as a surprise to officials of the Clark Development Corp. (CDC) and members of the Clark Investors and Locators Association who had been keeping their hopes high for the immediate passage of two bills in the House of Representatives that would grant tax amnesty and duty free privileges to business enterprises in Clark and other economic zones.

In a letter to the CDC, Mayor Marino Morales and municipal treasurer Angelito Pelayo said pursuant to the high court's resolution, the local government would start collecting the mayor's permit, building permits, and business taxes from Clark locators.

Morales said the municipal government has every right to collect the taxes and fees, as more than 90 percent of the special economic zone is within the territorial jurisdiction of this town.

On Oct. 23, 2003, the Supreme Court nullified the second sentence of Section 3 of Presidential Proclamation 420 of former President Fidel Ramos that granted tax incentives to business locators here, in Camp John Hay in Baguio City and in Poro Point in La Union.

The high court clarified that tax exemptions are granted only to Subic Bay Freeport Zone, the only existing special economic zone when Republic Act No. 7227 or the Bases Conversion Development Act was enacted in 1992.

On March 29, 2005, the high court affirmed with finality its Oct. 23, 2003 ruling through an en banc resolution. The case was filed by a coalition of locators on April 25, 1995, when Vicente Lim was still head of the Bases Conversion Development Authority.

CDC officials and coalition members have been worried about paying back taxes and duties since the issuance of the high court resolution.

Some locators said they would relocate to China and other economic zones in the region where tax and duty incentives were assured to them.

DA chief asks farmers to follow weather

OO NGA NAMAN !
RICE

TUGUEGARAO CITY—Agriculture Secretary Domingo Panganiban has urged Cagayan farmers to follow planting cycles to avoid losses when floods strike their farms.

"The problem with [your] farmers is that they plant without [following the] weather guide, hence floods always come before their crops are harvested," Panganiban told Gov. Edgar Lara and Department of Agriculture officials in Cagayan Valley during a meeting on Wednesday.

Reports from the DA said recurring floods have destroyed P1.8 billion worth of rice and corn in Cagayan Valley and damaged more than 45 million hectares of farmland.

Panganiban said he would work for the release of P4 million to rehabilitate farms and provide post-harvest facilities to farmers.

He also urged agriculture officials to teach farmers to follow planting cycles, study the local climate and prepare a weather calendar to know the best time to plant and harvest crops.

The flash floods were caused by continuous rains that swelled rivers in Cagayan and Isabela. The water releases at the Magat reservoir in Isabela were also blamed for the floods.

Panganiban also promised to provide corn and rice farmers in the region with two drying facilities to improve the quality of their harvests.

He said due to lack of technology, corn produced in Cagayan is good only for the manufacture of poultry and swine feeds.

In Ilagan, Isabela, Panganiban urged farmers to adopt scientific and modern methods of agricultural farming and to use rice bran or *dayami* as organic fertilizer.

He also asked local officials to push through with the corn oil processing plant, which will be set up in Barangay Linglingay in Gamu town.

"The best thing is do it here to cut on added costs (in transporting the corn in Metro Manila) and to have more jobs," he said.

He has initially released P18 million worth of corn seeds to farmers in Isabela and Cagayan following a series of floods that ravaged the two provinces last month.

In a dialogue with Cagayan Valley officials and farmers, Panganiban said he released P12 million for Isabela through the regional agriculture office in Cagayan Valley. *Estanislao Caldez and Vilamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

PNP tagged top rights violator

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—THE COMMISSION on Human Rights (CHR) in Central Mindanao said the Philippine National Police (PNP) in the region faced the most complaints for human rights violation in 2005.

Jenudin Ulangkaya, of the regional CHR, told reporters that the figure was based on data from January to Sept. 5 last year.

Ulangkaya said the CHR data showed that most of the 60 total human rights abuses recorded in the CHR regional office last year were attributed to police authorities.

The second top human rights violators were civilian criminals.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) came in fourth, while the New People's Army (NPA) came in next.

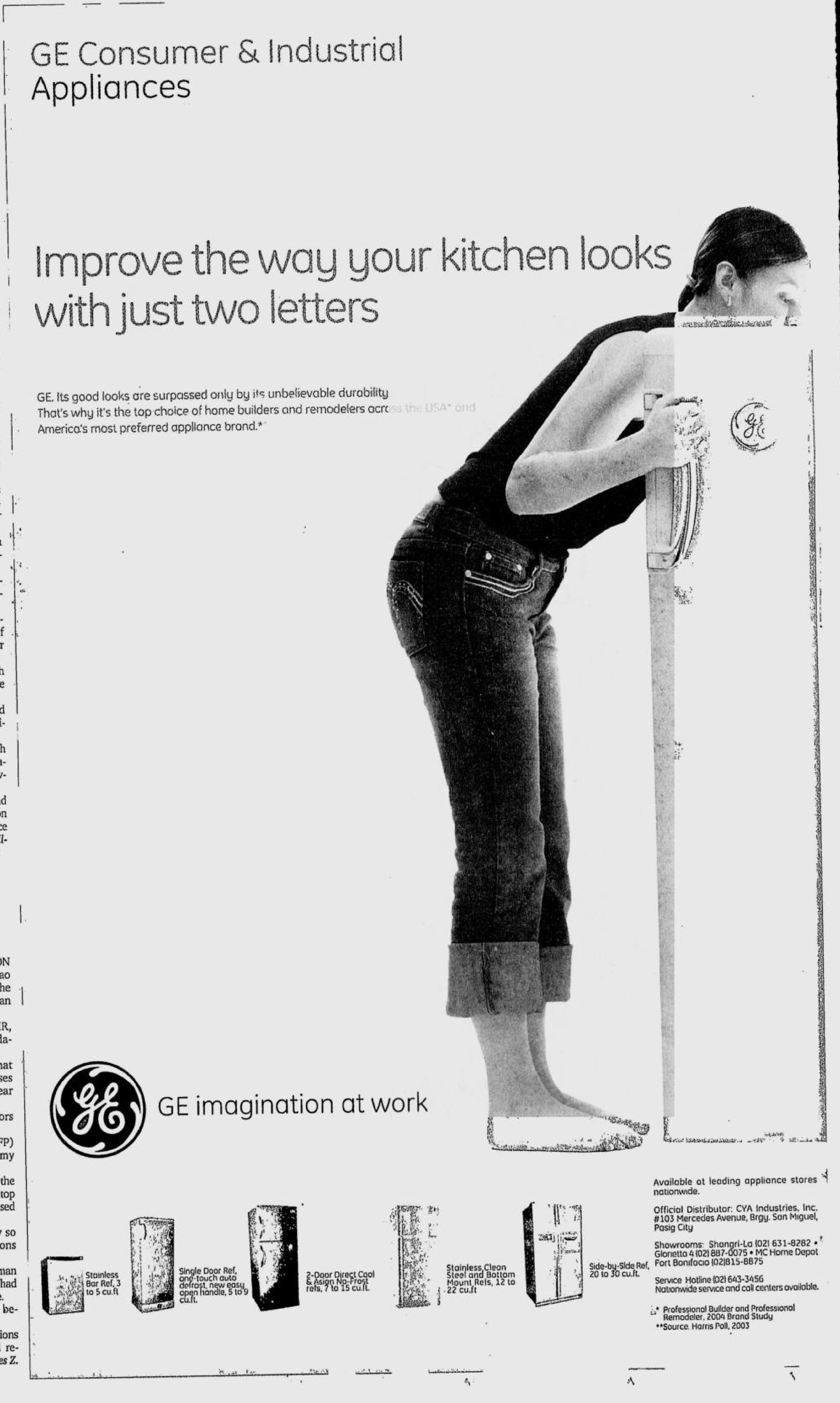
Ulangkaya said they were not surprised by the data because the police have always been the top human rights violator in the region, at least based on the number of complaints against them.

"They were the ones enforcing the law so they are very much vulnerable to accusations of human rights violations," he said.

He, however, clarified that most of the human right violation charges filed against policemen had already been dismissed due to lack of evidence.

Police authorities said they do not mind being tagged top human rights violator.

Senior Supt. Rolando Dalangin, operations chief of the Central Mindanao police, told reporters they were just doing their job. *Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*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RP warned of more floods, disasters due to logging

LUCENA CITY—AN OFFICIAL OF Greenpeace, an international environment watchdog, warned that the deadly combination of abnormal weather patterns associated with climate change and continued destructive logging would continue to wreak havoc in the country unless concrete steps were taken by the government.

Von Hernandez, campaign director for Greenpeace Southeast Asia, said in a statement that catastrophic floods had already been attributed to extreme precipitation associated with climate change.

More devastation

"But even more extreme devastation results when such abnormal weather events combine with the effects of destructive logging," Hernandez warned.

Citing statistics, he said an average of 500 lives are lost every year due to the 17 to 22 typhoons that pass through the country annually.

"This figure more than doubled in the November-December 2004 floods and landslides," Hernandez said.

He added that 10 times this number died in the Ormoc tragedy, which also occurred in the month of November.

These numbers and other statistics, such as damage to property and infrastructure, will increase as the frequency and strength of typhoons increase, he said.

Massive floods occurred in Oriental Mindoro, Isabela, Palawan, Quezon, Bicol and Caraga last month that left several persons killed and destroyed millions of pesos worth of property.

Dislocation

The floods, which occurred almost simultaneously, have also displaced tens of thousands of families.

Hernandez recalled that the Philippines had already experienced the impact of this deadly combination many times in the past, the worst among them being the Ormoc tragedy in 1991 and the Aurora and Quezon disasters of 2004.

"These disasters will continue to recur so long as measures to mitigate climate change and stop logging are not undertaken," he added.

According to the Greenpeace official, logging has exacerbated the effects of heavy rains.

He said that continuous logging—both legal and illegal—severely compromises the natural carrying capacity of forests, which act as effective barriers against strong winds, rains and landslides.

Hernandez said while the government cited extreme rainfall as the cause of floods, it has yet to acknowledge that the denudation of forest lands have also had a hand in the calamities.

Given the increasing prospect of extreme precipitation in the future, he urged the government to carry out stronger measures to protect remaining forests and stop destructive logging.

Urgent steps

He also called on the government to institute policies to reduce the country's dependence on climate change-causing fossil fuel energy systems and create a massive shift towards renewable energy.

"Our experiences with earlier disasters should have prepared us to anticipate and take preemptive action against future environmental hazards," Hernandez said. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

ILOILO FEAST ARNOLD ALMACEN/PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

Maasin, a mountain town 30 km from Iloilo City, brought the year to a close by celebrating its lore and way of life through the Tultugan Festival, named after a bamboo drum, on Dec. 29. Maasin is Iloilo's leading producer of bamboo and its products, like "sawali" (mat), furniture, lampshades, fans, ashtrays, home decors and other handicraft. The town's watershed, which is the source of drinking water to tens of thousands in Iloilo City, was reforested partly with bamboo since the 1980s.

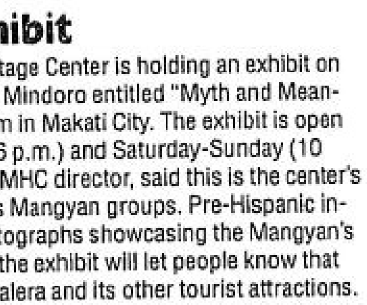
ROUNDUP

Ex-village chair slain

SAN MIGUEL, Bulacan—A former village chair was gunned down inside his farm in Barangay San Jose here on Saturday. Police said Eliseo de Leon, 49, died from bullet wounds in the head and body. Insp. Francsico Victoria, deputy police chief, said two gunmen greeted De Leon and his helper before they pulled out their .45 cal. and 9 mm guns and shot the former village chair. The suspects fled aboard a white Toyota Tamaraw Revo. De Leon was tagged as the primary suspect in the 1998 murder of former Vice Mayor Manuel Dantis. De Leon was released from jail on Dec. 15, 2004, after he was acquitted of murder charges.

Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Negros goes organic


GO, GO, GO ORGANIC !

ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEPH BRAVO

DUMAGUETE CITY—The Negros Oriental provincial government will receive some P5 million from the Department of Agriculture for organic farming projects in the province. Gov. George P. Arnaiz said the amount will be released to the province once a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is signed between him and DA regional director Eduardo Lecciones. The Sangguniang Panlalawigan has already authorized the governor to sign the MOA on behalf of the province. Arnaiz said he planned to buy a tractor for Tamlang Valley using P1.5 million from the DA fund, with the provincial government providing another P1.5 million since the tractor is estimated to cost P3 million. The governor said part of the DA amount would also be used to set up an organic demonstration farm at the provincial nursery compound.

Romy Amarado/PDI Visayas Bureau

Mangyan artifacts exhibit

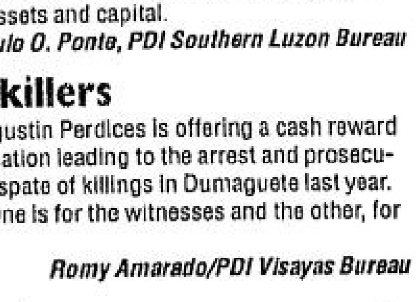
CITY OF CALAPAN—The Mangyan Heritage Center is holding an exhibit on the culture of the indigenous peoples of Mindoro entitled "Myth and Meaning" from Jan. 3-23 at the Ayala Museum in Makati City. The exhibit is open for free from Monday to Friday (9 a.m.-6 p.m.) and Saturday-Sunday (10 a.m.-7 p.m.). Emily Lorezon-Catapang, MHC director, said this is the center's first public display of artifacts of various Mangyan groups. Pre-Hispanic indigenous scripts and old-to-recent photographs showcasing the Mangyan's way of life will also be shown. She said the exhibit will let people know that there is more to Mindoro than Puerto Galera and its other tourist attractions.

Marciano T. Virola Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Negros execs upbeat on economy

BACOLOD CITY—Officials were optimistic about the economy of Negros Occidental in 2006 with high mill gate sugar prices. Sugar Regulatory Administrator James Ledesma said he expected sugar prices to remain high this year because of a projected shortage in supply. But a possible sugar shortage would mean that Ledesma would have to do a balancing act of ensuring that producers enjoy prices commensurate to supply while ensuring that consumers do not suffer from high retail prices, said Presidential Adviser for Western Visayas Rafael Coscolluela.

Calamba has no market


BATA PA NGA AKO NUNG NAGANAP ANG SUNOG NA 'YON !

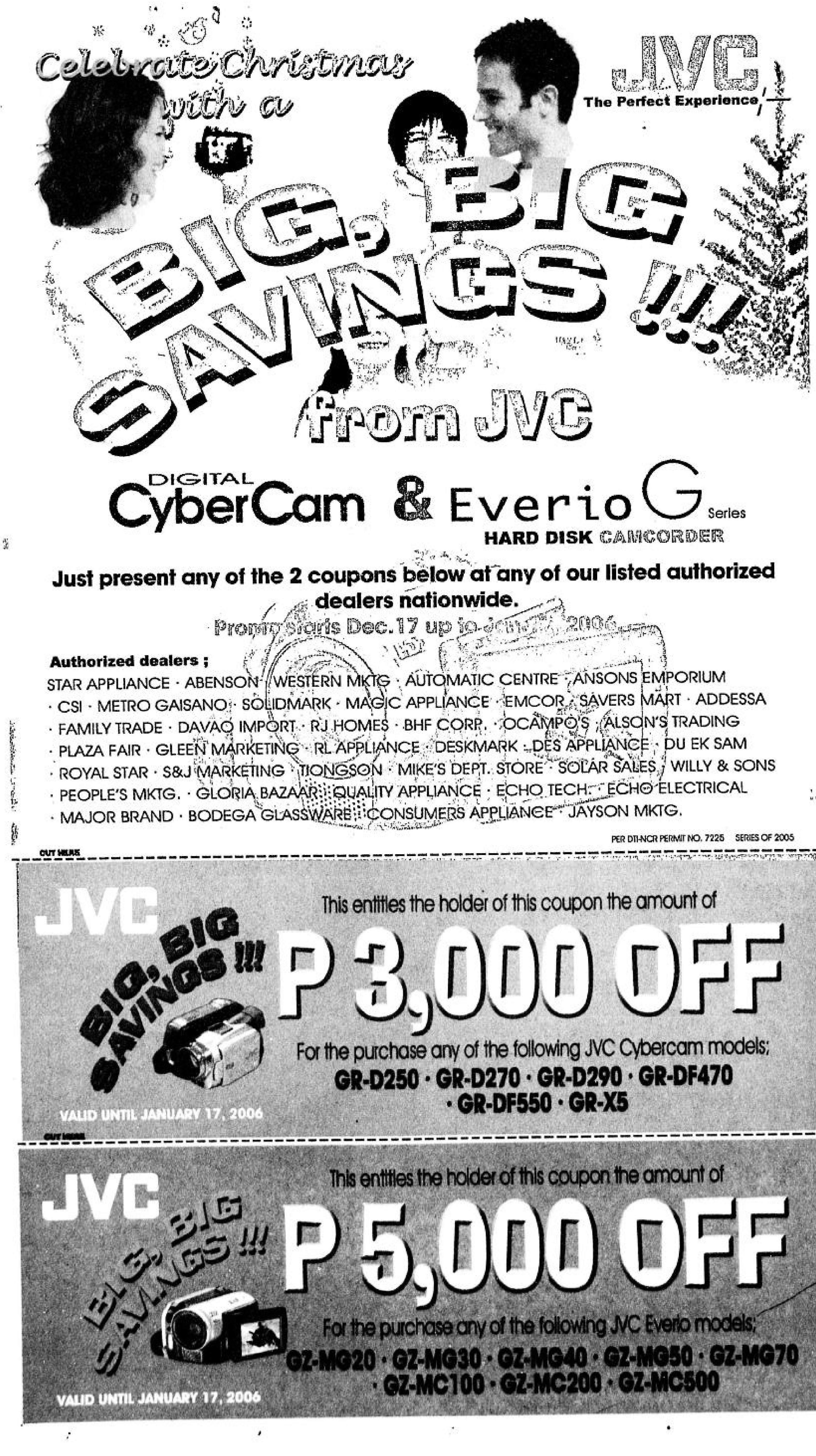
CALAMBA CITY—This former town, which lost its huge public market in a big fire 11 years ago, has remained without one. And to residents and its former occupants, one nagging question has remained unanswered: What caused the fire and who should be responsible? The controversial fire happened at about 10:30 a.m. on Dec. 31, 1994. Some 1,000 businessmen-tenants were displaced by the fire. While government authorities at that time maintained that the fire was accidentally caused by the explosion of firecrackers that were on display for sale, most victims and the public had suspected that it was intentional. One vendor had told the INQUIRER that he lost P600,000 worth of groceries, fruits and vegetables in that fire. Another said it was the most painful thing that ever happened in his life. Many businessmen lost millions of pesos in assets and capital.

Romulo O. Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Reward offered for killers

DUMAGUETE CITY—City Mayor Agustin Perdices is offering a cash reward to anybody who can provide information leading to the arrest and prosecution of persons responsible for the spate of killings in Dumaguete last year. Perdices made two kinds of offer. One is for the witnesses and the other, for the gunmen.

Romy Amarado/PDI Visayas Bureau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New Miaa policy for check in bags

By Nikko Dizon

THE MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUthority (Miaa) is set to implement a "100 percent sanitized baggage" procedure in which departing passengers would not be allowed to hold onto their checked in luggage once these have passed through the initial X-ray screening.

"It's a security enhancement procedure required by the ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization)," retired Brig. Gen. Angel Atutubo, Miaa assistant general manager for security and emergency services, said.

International airlines operating at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia), however, have warned that the new system would only result in chaos and longer lines in the cramped departure areas of Terminal 1 and the Centennial Terminal 2.

"These additional procedures would only add to the chokepoints in the terminals," Santi Medrana III, vice chair of the Airline Operators Council (AOC), told reporters.

The AOC also expressed concern that the new security procedure would result in more lost bags and delayed flights.

There are more than 2,000 departing passengers during peak hour flights at Terminal 1 alone.

Under the sanitized baggage scheme, after the initial X-ray, passengers would turn over their bags to porters who would bring it to the check in area.

Atutubo said their porters are deputized security personnel who have undergone security training.

The Miaa official added that some 60 porters would be deployed in Terminal 1 while another 18 would be stationed in Terminal 2.

Atutubo showed reporters a copy of ICAO Annex 17, series 2004, which he said is the Miaa's basis for the new security procedure.

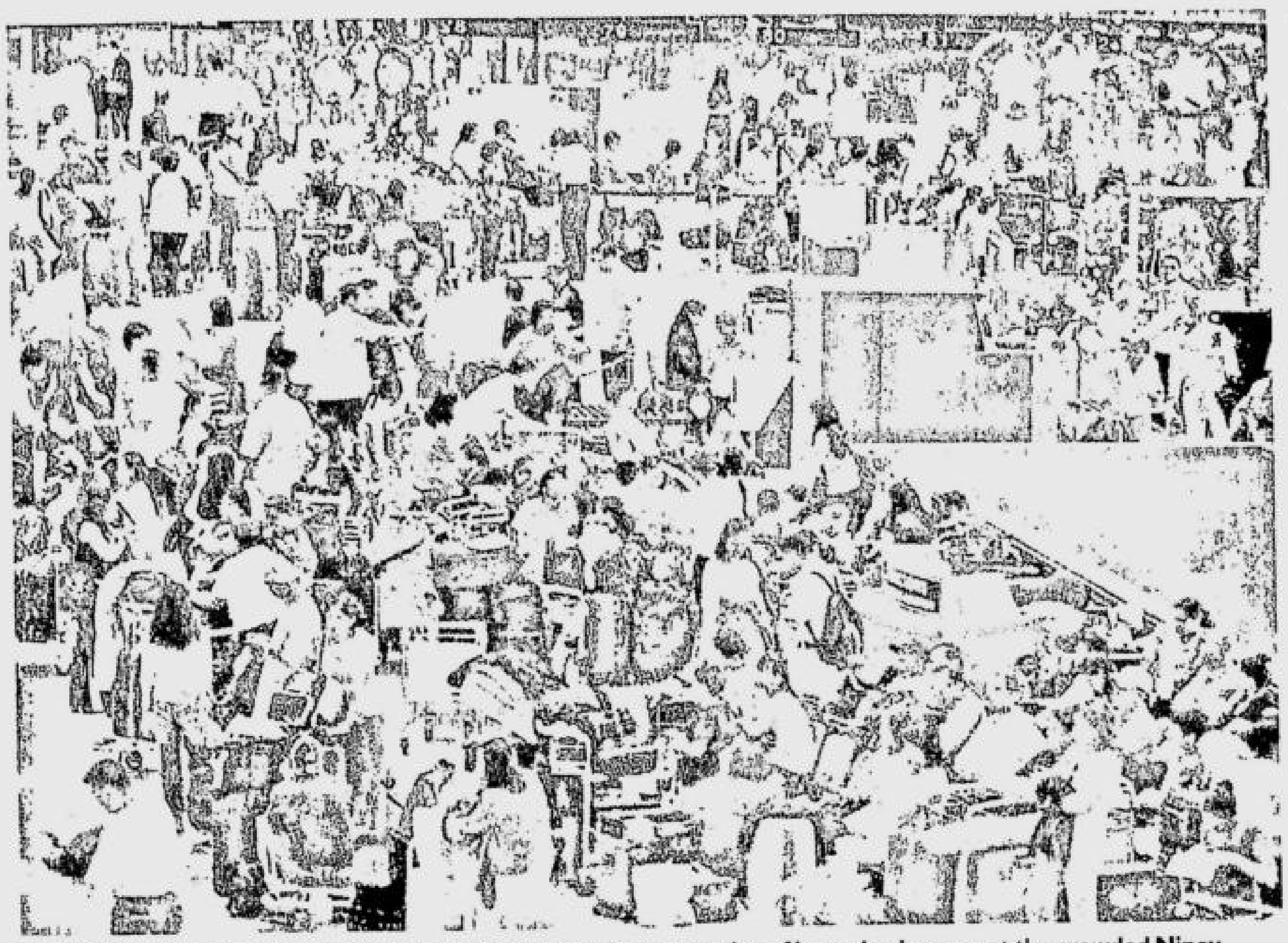
The ICAO regulation read: "From 1 January 2006, each Contracting State shall establish measures to ensure that originating hold baggage intended to be carried in an aircraft engaged in international civil aviation operations is screened prior to being loaded into the aircraft."

Medrana, however, said the regulation did not state that passengers should not be allowed contact with their checked in luggage.

"I think semantics is the issue," he said. "The security measures are already in place—there's the X-ray, the pat down or body frisking, and the hand wand or detector."

Atutubo, meanwhile, urged airlines to observe the dry run of the new security procedure so that they could recommend improvements.

A dry run was scheduled yesterday afternoon, as well as on Jan. 9 and 12.



THE "SANITIZED" scheme would hopefully ensure tighter screening of incoming luggage at the crowded Ninoy Aquino International Airport according to authorities.
ROGER MARGALLO

3 rape suspects nabbed in Las Piñas

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE POLICE YESTERDAY SAID THEY had solved the case of a six-year-old girl who had been raped and killed in Las Piñas City with the arrest of three suspects on Wednesday night.

Acting on a tip, the police arrested Jeffrey Quilatan, 21, of Pulang Lupa 1, Las Piñas City; Ronald Dacrama, 26, of Bacoor, Cavite; and Erick Garin, 29, of Basa Compound, also in Zapote, Las Piñas City.

A witness claimed that he had overheard the suspects "talk about the girl they had raped and killed," the police said.

The three men owned up to the crime during interrogation, said Supt. Josephus Angan, chief of the Las Piñas City police. The detained men had been arrested before for drug addiction, he added.

At around 7 a.m. on Dec. 31 last year, the body of Ericka Estardo, a pre-school student, of Barangay Zapote, Las Piñas City, was found in an abandoned house at the Doña Julita Subdivision in Pulanglupa 2. She had been reported missing the night before.

The girl had been stabbed 12 times. Initial evidence indicated that she had been raped. The police are still awaiting results of the DNA analysis being run by the National Bureau of Investigation on fluids and hair samples found at the crime scene.

At a press conference in Camp Crame yesterday, one of the suspects, Ronald, admitted that he had stabbed the suspect before she was raped.

"*Bangag ako sa* rugby (I was high on rugby). I stabbed her," he said.

It was Quilatan who abused the child, and Garin who held her down, according to the police.

The girl's parents, Salvador and Lenny, were still in shock during the press briefing.

Lenny said her daughter did not say she was going out on the night of Dec. 30.

The couple found out that she was missing at around 8 p.m., and frantically searched for her around the neighborhood.

"My daughter never had a chance. If it were up to me, I'd kill these three men," said Salvador. The victim was the second of four children.

Lenny, who was visibly distraught, said she was still in denial over the way her daughter had died.

"She was just six years old. These brutes should be hanged," she said.

'Visits okay, but no custody for Plinky'

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE FORMER LOVER OF FITNESS EXPERT Plinky Recto, whom she had accused of abducting their year-old son earlier this week, said yesterday he would be keeping the boy in his care. However, Recto will be allowed to visit their son "even without going to the court."

"She is welcome to visit our son. But the custody will remain with me," the boy's father told the INQUIRER in a phone interview. Recto's former partner, a wealthy lawyer in Negros Occidental, earlier said that he took the boy from her house in Mandaluyong City on Tuesday morning, to protect him from Recto, whom he claimed needed psychiatric help. He maintained that he would raise their son himself.

But Recto's lawyer, Viriato Dupaya, said the proposal was "totally unacceptable. What we want is custody of the child. We will allow him to visit the child under strict court supervision." Dupaya also denied that Recto needed psychiatric help. "That is a blatant lie. Recto has no psychiatric disorder," he added.

Recto's former lover had earlier told the INQUIRER that he did not kidnap his son. He showed an order from the Bago City Regional Trial Court in Negros Occidental which granted him temporary custody of the one-year-old boy. In his petition for custody, the man had accused Recto of being an unfit mother, often leaving their son to the care of the maids.

But Dupaya said they would be taking legal action to get the boy back. "He has no parental authority over the child based on the Family Code because the child is illegitimate," he said.

4 hurt as 3 more fires hit Metro

FOUR PERSONS WERE HURT WHILE NEARLY 100 families lost their houses as three fires hit Manila and Makati cities yesterday.

In Manila, Wilson and Estrella Sy were treated for smoke inhalation after a fire destroyed their home at 293 Lara St., Binondo, three days after another couple were killed in a fire in the same area.

SFO1 Wilson Tana said the responding firemen had to convince the Sys to come down from the fifth floor. Tana said the fire began at 8:17 p.m. and destroyed the fifth floor of the seven-story Somar building. It was put out at 9:30 p.m.

In Tondo, two more were injured in an hour-long fire that began at 469 Dandan St. at 1:16 p.m. Ofelia Victor and fireman Senior Insp. Bonifacio Carter suffered minor injuries and were taken to a nearby hospital for treatment.

In Makati City, around 100 families lost their homes in a blaze that started at the house of Lina Sarmiento at 3427 Adora corner Masangkay Streets, Barangay Tejeros, a two-story structure in the middle of a slum area.

Before long, the blaze, which started at 6:43 p.m., spread to nearby houses mostly made of light materials. It was put out at 11:50 p.m., after 35 firetrucks were deployed to the scene. *Margaux C. Ortiz and Tarra V. Quismundo*

METROBRIEFS

QC bans piracy

QUEZON City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. has signed into law an ordinance banning the sale, rental, transfer, distribution, manufacture or production of pirated, counterfeit, or fake goods, articles or services within the city. The measure aims to protect legitimate enterprises from unfair competition posed by pirated goods, according to Quezon City majority floor leader Ariel Inton. Under the ordinance, violators shall be fined P2,500 or jailed for a period of not more than six months, or both, depending on the discretion of the court. The business permits and licenses of establishments found violating the local anti-piracy law will also be suspended or cancelled. The measure was introduced by Councilors Edcel Lagman Jr., Ariel Inton, Restituto Malangen, Julian Coseteng, Jorge Banal and Bayani Hipol.

DJ Yap

BAWAL NA DITO SA Q.C. 'YAN 'KO OKEY?

ILLUSTRATIONS: STEPH BRAVO

Accident at fish port

WORKERS at a fishing dock inside the Navotas Fish Port Complex panicked when a forklift and its driver fell into the water before noon yesterday. "We were relieved when the driver surfaced with minor injuries after a few minutes," said Augusto Calderon, repair superintendent of the Frabelle Fishing Corp. Renato Tobias suffered only bruises but the forklift would have to undergo major repairs, Calderon added. He said Tobias may have miscalculated while maneuvering the forklift because of the dock's narrow perimeter.

Nancy C. Carvajal

Citywide ID system

IF PLANS push through, residents in Marikina City can look forward to having a Citizens Identification Card which they can use in their transactions with the government. "We are now holding consultations with officials and people concerned," City Councilor Donn Favis told the INQUIRER yesterday. He said that if things go as planned, the printing of the Citizens' ID may start this year. Favis added that the ID card, an offshoot of a city ordinance on a computerized registration system for residents approved in 2001, would speed up government transactions. "This would result in paperless transactions. All the residents have to do is bring their Citizens' Card," he said. Holders will also be given privileges such as discounts on prompt tax payments. Police records will also be incorporated into the database, which will be easily accessed using the card. "This will help us in our peace and order campaign. Violations of city ordinances can be monitored," Favis said.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

Free car wash for taxpayers

PAY your real estate taxes early and get a discount. Not only that, we'll also wash your car for free. The city governments of Marikina and Mandaluyong have dangled this tempting offer to encourage taxpayers in their areas to beat the Jan. 31 deadline for the payment of real property tax and business permits. In Marikina City, those who pay their real property tax in full for the year before the deadline will get a 20 percent discount. Those who pay their taxes for the first quarter before Jan. 31, on the other hand, will be entitled to a 10 percent discount. Twenty tellers have been assigned to wait on taxpayers every weekday, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m, with no lunch breaks. Payments will be accepted even on Saturdays, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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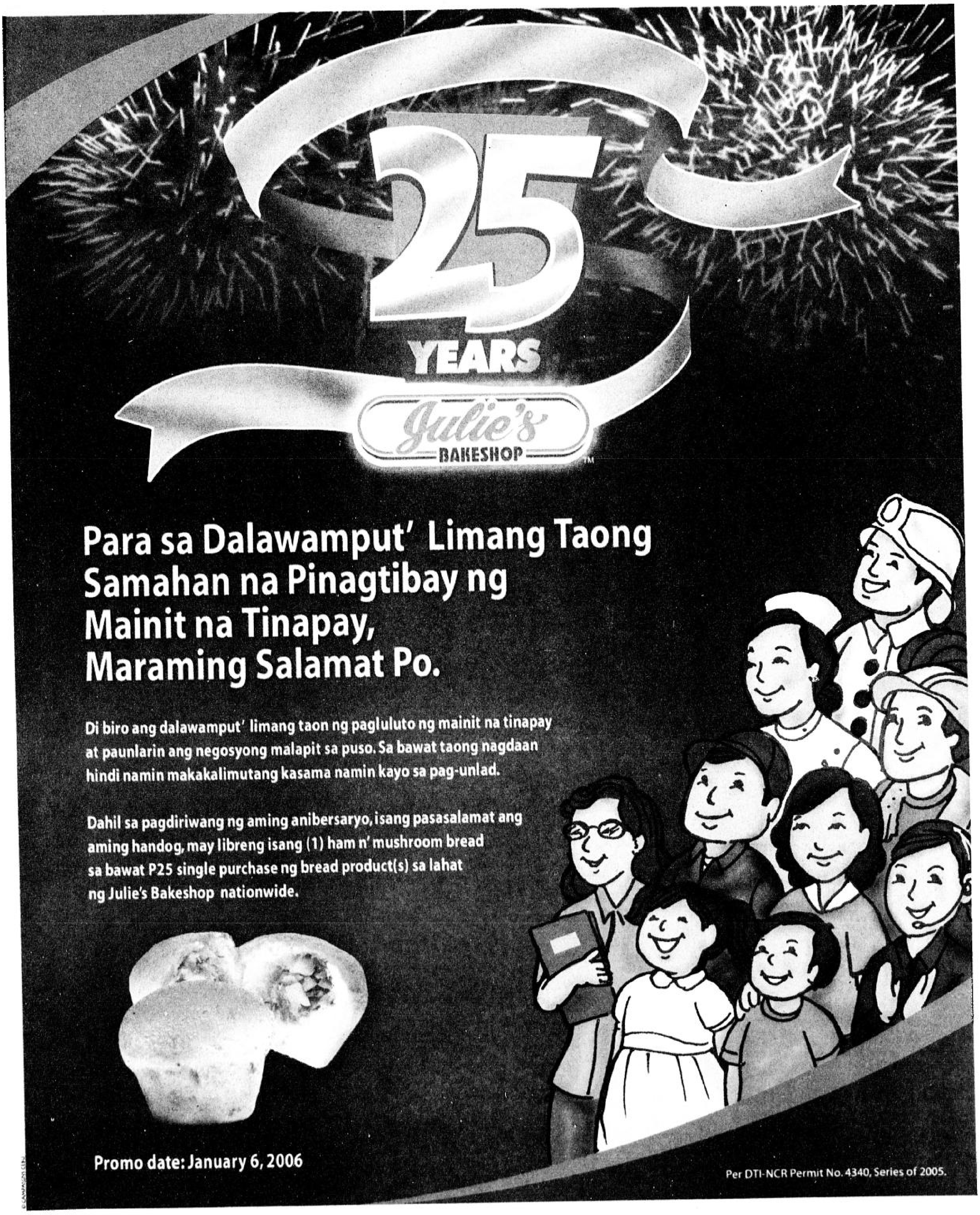

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BASKETBALL: NBA – Rockets vs Cavs; 9 a.m. (r-8 p.m.): STAR Sports; Pacers vs Warriors; 11:30 a.m. (r-9 p.m.); Solar Sports – Injury-plagued Houston battles Cleveland even as Indiana travels west to take on Golden State. Schedule subject to change without prior notice.

Compiled by L. Mangulat

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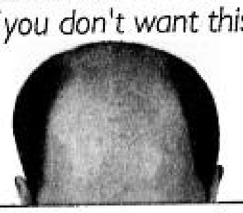

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Teetering Tigers fight for survival vs Beermen

WHAT'S INSIDE

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- Jennifer passes up World Cup stint /A18

- Hingis fights way to semis /A19

THE SITUATION IS DO-OR-DIE for Coca-Cola.

The San Miguel Beermen, though, would rather ignore the luxury of a twice-to-beat edge and face the back-to-the-wall Tigers head-on in their survival playoff in the San Mig Coffee-PBA Fiesta Conference tonight at the Cuneta Astrodome.

As ninth and last-placer in the classification round, the Tigers have no other recourse but to hurdle the eighth-seeded Beermen twice to advance to a best-of-three duel with the Air21 Express in the wildcard phase.

"We'd forgotten about Christmas and worked hard," said Coca-Cola coach Binky Favis. "We still have a chance and we're going all out for it."

A defeat would send Coca-Cola to the cellar for the second straight conference, a franchise worst after Tigers head coach Chot Reyes took over the national team early last year.

"We don't want to think about the twice-to-beat advantage," said San Miguel Beer coach Jong Uichico, whose Beermen dropped their last two games with import Kevin Freeman. "We'll play this one as if there's no more tomorrow."

GAME TODAY
(*Cuneta Astrodome*)
7 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs San Miguel Beer

Returning for the Beermen is Kwan Johnson, who was reactivated from the injury list. Johnson took credit for San Miguel's five-game winning streak late in the classification round.

Olsen Racela, Danny Ildefonso, Dondon Hontiveros, Nic Belasco, Dorian Peña and Danny Seigle are seeking a return trip to the Finals after the Beermen captured the 2004-2005 Fiesta Conference title.

The road, however, will be long and bumpy as Uichico and the Beermen—they need to win 14 games from the playoffs to the best-of-seven championship to keep the crown.

The defending champions won only six of their 16 games in the classification phase after starting the conference at 1-8. Most of the Beermen's losses were decided by five points or less.

"If only we had been lucky and won two out of those eight losses, we could have been in the top four," said Uichico. "Now, we're just making the most out of what we have. It's a long shot, but my players still have pride in themselves."

The Tigers staggered out of the classification round with three straight setbacks, the last against the Red Bull Barako sans Omar Thomas.

Thomas was fined P150,000 and served a one-game suspension for causing an ugly cut on Dennis Espino's head that took at least seven stitches to close.

Now, the onus is on Ali Peek, Rafi Reavis, John Arigo, Poch Juinio, rookie Dennis Miranda and Thomas who all need to be on their toes to keep the Beermen at bay and the wildcard slot within reach.

June Navarro

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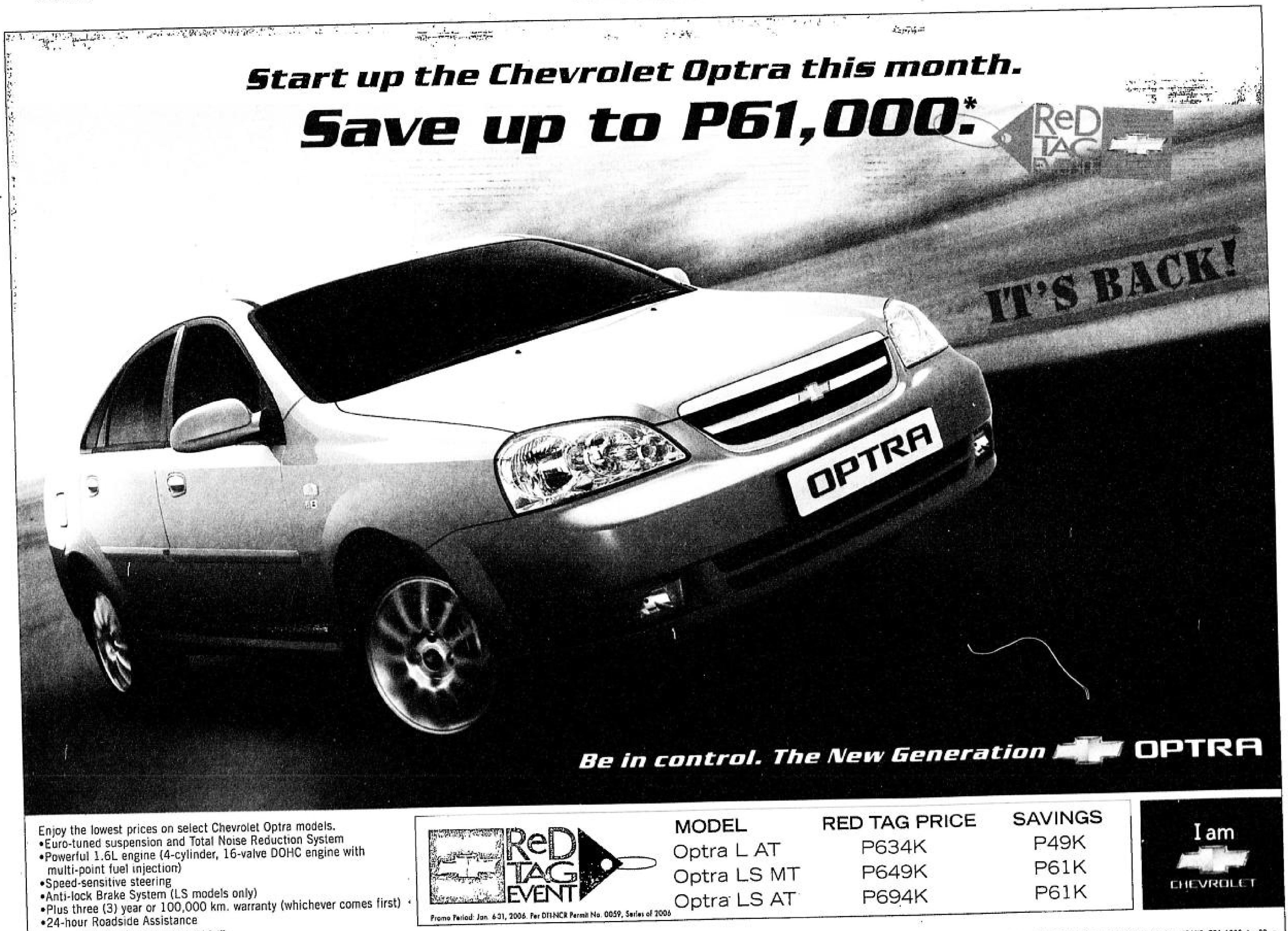

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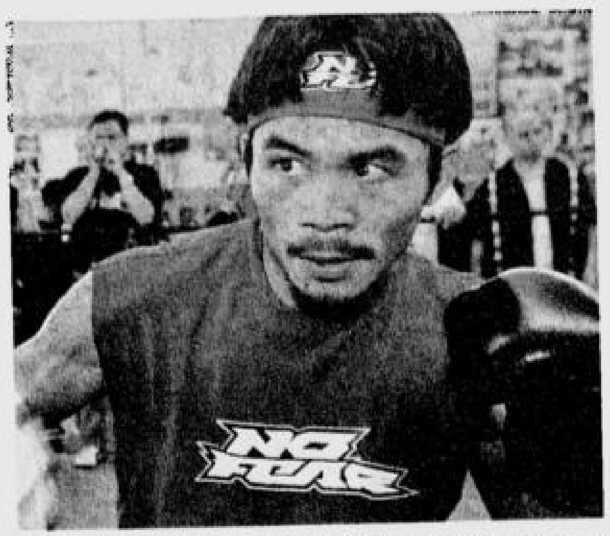
No Pacquiao lapses this time, says Roach


MANNY Pacquiao works out at the Wild Card Gym. AP

FILIPINO SUPERSTAR MANNY PACQUIAO HAS described himself "in tremendous shape" while sparring against much bigger welterweight fighters at the Wild Card Boxing Gym in Los Angeles.

Pacquiao, who continues his hard training for the Jan. 21 mega-rematch with Erik "El Terrible" Morales, refused to divulge details of his buildup, although he said there will be no excuses after the fight this time.

"It was my first time to use those (Winning) gloves and it was a distraction," Pacquiao told the boxing website Fightnews. "I'm happy to use the Reyes gloves this time."

The Filipino hero also said the cut he sustained after an accidental headbutt in his first encounter with Morales also bothered him.

"It was a big distraction to me," he said. "I couldn't see out of my right eye, so when he came to the right side, I couldn't see him."

In a teleconference from his Wild Card Gym in Los Angeles yesterday, trainer Freddie Roach said everything is on schedule for Pacquiao.

"He's got some great sparring partners," Roach said. "Manny wants this fight badly and I can't wait for it to happen."

Roach admitted there were some tactical lapses during the first fight, which Morales won by unanimous decision, adding they plan to avoid the same mistakes again.

"I don't think we fought a great fight the first time," the American trainer said. "Manny was overanxious and a little left-hand hungry.

"There are definitely adjustments that can be made to fight a much better fight this time. We're also studying the tapes of Morales' loss to (Zahir) Raheem. He had trouble with Raheem's speed and Manny has that type of speed. We're going to take advantage of that if we can."

Raheem, a former US Olympian, beat Morales last September in the same card in Los Angeles that saw Pacquiao stop Mexican veteran Hector Velasquez in the sixth round.

Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor

Hernandez PSA jockey of the year

JONATHAN HERNANDEZ WON THE PSA (Philipine Sportswriters Association) Jockey of the Year award, beating two other big names in a close race for the prestigious honor.

In clinching his first PSA award in a career that began in 1998, the 26-year-old Hernandez, "JB" to friends and the betting public, made it to the distinguished roster of major awardees to be feted by the sportswriting fraternity on Jan. 14 at the Manila Pavilion.

Hernandez, a native of Sta. Ana, Manila, registered the highest winning percentage and finished first in the number of stakes races won while emerging a close second in money winnings to beat Patti Dilema and Jesse B. Guce.

A product of the Philippine Jockeys Academy, Hernandez won 225 times in 838 rides for a leading 26.8 average, totalled a second-best P53,519,009 in money winnings and triumphed in 15 stakes races on board seven horses, including Cover Girl (five times) and Juggernaut (thrice).

Three-way fight

Dilema, a many-time PSA awardee, wound up first in money winnings (P58,964,454.66), but could only deliver 249 times in 1,147 rides for a 21.7 percent average. to the top three among leading stakes performers.

Guce, son of the illustrious Jesus Guce, finished third in money winnings (P45,338,052.91) and normed 22.9 on 197 victories in 858 rides as he made the fight for the award a three-way affair up to the last three months of 2005.

Twenty-two others are on the roster of major awardees to be honored along with the other big achievers in the rites sponsored by Red Bull, with San Miguel Corp., Philippine Sports Commission and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza as supporters.

Leading the honor roll is Team Philippines, recipient of the Athlete of the Year award for its historic overall victory in the last 23rd Southeast Asian Games.

Seventeen personalities and entities will be cited for their contributions in making 2005 a big year for local sports while the rest of Filipino gold medalists in the SEA Games will receive special citations from the 46-year-old association.

Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, the man credited for the successful SEAG staging, will be the guest of honor.

Bata Reyes tops money list; 3 more in Top 10

TOP OF POOL TOTEM POLE: Efren "Bata" Reyes. EDGAR MONTANA

EFREN "BATA" REYES' MAGIC CONTINUES TO rake in the cash.

For the fourth time in the last five years, the Filipino pool icon emerged the top earner among the world's billiards players with accumulated earnings of $279,169 (about P14.8 million) for 2005.

The 51-year-old Reyes' purse was boosted by his biggest ever paycheck of $200,000, his prize for beating defending champion Mike Sigel of the United States in the finals of the 2005 International Pool Tour (IPT) King of the Hill 8-Ball Shoot Out last Dec. 4 at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida.

Reyes, already enshrined in the billiards Hall of Fame, was joined by compatriots Marlon Manalo, Francisco "Django" Bustamante and Santos Sambajon in the top 10 of the 2005 Player Money List released by "Az Billiards.com" yesterday.

His eyesight improved by laser surgery early last year, Reyes also snared the Derby City Classic, 9-Ball and Master of the Table titles and topped the Japan Open and a San Miguel Asian 9-Ball Tour leg to duplicate his domination of the billiards circuit in 2001, 2002 and 2004. Reyes wound up third richest in 2003.

With the $100,000 prize for ruling the 2005 Texas Hol Em Billiards last Dec. 12, Manalo wound up third behind Sigel ($250,000) with total winnings of $199,500.

Bustamante finished fourth, accumulating $140,272 following a third place finish in the IPT finals event that netted him $70,000 last December.

The US-based Sambajon, a native of Macalelon, Quezon, pocketed $89,669, including a $73,500 bonanza for topping the 2005 Skins Billiard Championships last October in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

Rounding out the top 10 are No.5 Allison Fisher of the US ($111,200); No.6 and reigning World 9-Ball champion Wu Chia-ching of Chinese-Taipei ($109,500.); No.7 Loree Jon Jones of the US ($105,500); No. 8 Johnny Archer of the US ($100,104) and No.9 Thorsten Hohmann of Germany ($96,635).

Former world pool champion Alex "The Lion" Pagulayan, a triple-gold medalist in the 2005 Manila Southeast Asian Games, earned $80,824, bolstered by his US Open victory, worth $40,000, over fellow Filipino Jose "Amang" Parica last September in Chesapeake, Virginia.

Pagulayan, a native of Cabagan, Isabela, also took the top purse of $10,000 by ruling the SML Entertainment 9-Ball Championships last April in Calgary, Canada.

Sigel bested compatriot Loree Jon Jones in the finals of the IPT World 8-Ball Championships to bring home $150,000 last August in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Marlon Bernardino, contributor

GAB strips Catubay of flyweight crown

FEDERICO "MAGNIFICO" CATUBAY LOST HIS bid for the OPBF title recently. The other day, he lost his national crown as well.

For failing to defend his RP flyweight title a year after acquiring it, the Games and Amusements Board stripped Catubay of the crown.

It was a big blow for Catubay, who only recently blew his crack at the OPBF flyweight title with a close decision loss to champion Noriyuki Komatsu of Japan.

The GAB also turned down a request by Catubay's manager, Sammy "Don King" Gello-ani, to have the boxer included in an elimination fight for the vacant title on Jan. 15.

Catubay won the title via a technical knockout win over veteran Jerry Pahayahay in Cagayan de Oro on Jan. 3, 2005.

In his letter denying an earlier request by Gello-ani to reschedule Catubay's title defense to Jan. 15, GAB chair Eric Buhain cited Article 23 of the GAB rules which says the period for defending a title should "not exceed one year from the date of acquiring or successfully defending such title."

Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor

Jennifer passes up World Cup stint

ROSALES REUTERS

By Jong Arcano

JENNIFER ROSALES IS PASSING UP THE chance to represent the country in the Ladies World Cup of Golf.

And a lot of people are asking why.

While Swede superstar Annika Sorenstam and American hotshot Paula Creamer are heading to Sun City, South Africa, to play for their respective flags in the Jan. 20-22 event, J-Ro has given up her slot and opted to focus on her training in Manila for the coming LPGA season.

The World Cup will be played at the Gary Player Country Club course, also the venue of the Million Dollar Golf Challenge.

The original Philippine team was made up of Rosales and Ana Larraneta, a European Tour player born to a Spanish father and a Filipino mom.

But when Rosales begged off, Larraneta also waived her slot.

The official World Cup website, though, still lists the Rosales-Larraneta pair as RP entries.

The country's bid in the event that offers $1 million will now be carried by Dorothy Delasin and Ria Denise Quiazon, who are both Fil-Ams. Delasin is an LPGA Tour regular while Quiazon plays on satelllite events in the US.

Delasin and Rosales almost won the inaugural World Cup last year, also in South Africa, losing by two strokes to eventual champion Japan. The second place tie with Korea equalled the best performance by an RP duo in the World Cup, 18 years after Ben Arda and Rudy Labares finished second in the men's World Cup at Wack Wack.

Delasin and Rosales each went home with P3.5 million for the runner-up finish.

Rosales' mother, Lourdes, told the INQUIRER that Jennifer finds the long trip to South Africa "physically taxing." She said her daughter is busy preparing for her defense of the SBS Open, the opening leg of the LPGA Tour, on Feb. 16-18.

"Jenny wants to be well-prepared for the SBS," Ms Rosales said.

Jennifer is now in training at the Manila Southwoods with her swing coach Bong Lopez.

SPORTSWATCH

Santos, Batislaon top darts classic

ALLAN Santos of El Tusuquero and Hector Batislaon of Makati ended 2005 with a big bang by winning the Huling Hirit and Pearl Darts Classic doubles tournament held recently at the Pearl Billiard and Bar in Parañaque City. Santos and Batislaon swept the elimination round, and then topped the winners' bracket but needed a deciding game to repulse the duo of Mon Dizon (LM Darters) and Tocs Seduco (Makati) in the finals.

65 fights in Pasay derby today

SIXTY-FIVE quality fights are scheduled in a P300,000 4-cock derby today at the Pasay City Cockpit. The venue's first offering for the 2006 cock season, sponsored exclusively by Sagupaan Complexor 3000, is hosted by pit manager Butchoy Olano and Lito Roque of the Ika Mae Group. The search for the Pasay Cockpit Cockers Association (PCCA) Cocker of the Year starts next Friday via a special 4-cock derby. For inquiries, call 843-1890, 843-1746 or 816-6750.

TANGKAD SAGAD CAGING: Multitled San Beda Red Cubs coach and tournament director Edmundo Badolato (seated, right) and InterMed president Fernando V. Segovia (left) formalize the staging of the Cherifer Tangkad Sagad Basketball Tournament for players 12 years old and younger recently. Witnessing the affair were Tom Meneses, Cherifer product manager, and Bernard Ocampo, organizer of the five-on-five competition

Sagas and sages

COMMENTARY

By Percy D. Della

SPORTS FANS STILL IN A HYPNOTIC trance following the country's convincing campaign in the Southeast Asian Games will get a fresh dose of ZZZs on Jan. 14.

That's when the Philippine Sportswriters Association hands out its Athlete of the Year award to the entire Philippine team victorious in the recent regional sports wars.

The 23rd edition of the SEA Games was a saga. A saga must have a hero and the hero of this one was the 700-strong Team Philippines that reaped 113 gold medals.

The team's haul was worth the overall title in the biennial meet—a triumph that has sent fans to dreamland—to a momentary sports Camelot peopled by heroes and demigods.

It's a new Eden that's sure to be irrecoverable by the time the Asian Games come around, or earlier. Meantime, the national government has suddenly become well stocked not with students but sages of sports.

Like characters sent up from central casting, these sudden and born-again sports scholars have come to play cameos, alas, even feature roles for our athletes. The idea is obvious—to wrap themselves up in civic pride while the population at large is influenced by millions of sports aficionados.

From a few solons, there are now at least 120 fellows in Congress who have signed a resolution upping the budget for sports from a paltry sum to P250 million a year.

A southern congressman who has acted with stateliness for sports says the budget for the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) is a "done deal." He has confidently passed the ball to senators of the realm.

The chair of the PSC has joined in the fun, finding new gumption to up the ante for athletes and coaches—with the promise of free education for those in the national pool.

The chair said a Philippine Institute of Sports (what an acronym) will help instill virtues that could lead to excellence for players and their mentors.

Not to be outdone, a former PSC chair wants the revival of a master plan for sports. The blueprint focuses on a short-term formula to achieve a loftier goal—the country's first Olympic gold.

There seems to be a problem of continuity in the government's sports priorities. The master plan spoused by this former PSC honcho was mothballed after he was replaced in 1998.

Can't blame the sports fans for refusing to return from dreamland.

It's simply because most stewards of sports appear to refuse waking up from Lalaland, either.

Sports note: Good luck to two prominent G-men who are said to be contemplating on leading two of the better national sports associations. Bureau of Immigration Commissioner Al Fernandez and Surigao Rep. Butch Pichay are reportedly interested in heading the NSAs for athletics and chess, respectively. These no-nonsense gents are capable of waking up the country's sports leadership from a seeming stupor.

Philsoc may sell assets to pay off debts

By Musong R. Castillo

BEFORE DISSOLVING, THE PHILIPPINE SOUTHeast Asian Games Organizing Committee (Philsoc) will sell the assets and equipment it purchased for the competition to help pay off debts amounting to about P60 million.

Secretary general Steve Hontiveros yesterday told the INQUIRER that this will be discussed by the executive committee of the Philsoc in the next few days to pay several creditors who have been after the committee since the Games ended on Dec. 5.

"It's one of the things that our president (Jose "Peping" Cojuangco) said we can do to settle our obligations," Hontiveros said.

The sale is expected to leave national athletes without world-class equipment to use to prepare for the Asian Games in Doha, Qatar in December.

Hontiveros said the Philsoc may offer the equipment to the Philippine Sports Commission first and then to philantrophists, who, hopefully, would donate them to various National Sports Associations.

"The Philsoc really did not have money to begin with," Hontiveros, also the national bowling head, added. "We are still trying to make ends meet."

The PSC had said that it will help the Philsoc settle some of its obligations, like outstanding hotel and food bills in venues in Bacolod and Cebu.

Philsoc fell short of meeting its projected P1 billion budget to host the Games.

Caddie benefits from Tiger's absence, rules Super Saloon

WOODS (back to camera) celebrates with Williams after winning the 2005 Masters. REUTERS

KAPALUA, Hawaii—AT LEAST ONE PERSON could not have been more thrilled that Tiger Woods skipped the Mercedes Championships —his caddie.

Steve Williams, a race car driver in New Zealand when he's not toting the bag for the world's No. 1 player, won the New Zealand Super Saloon Championship this week with a dramatic rally that would have made his boss proud.

"It's the No. 1 event in racing in New Zealand," Williams said from his home in Auckland. "As I told Tiger, now I know how he feels when he wins the Masters."

Williams, who races stock cars on dirt tracks, had not been able to compete in the Super Saloon because it's the same week as the season-opening Mercedes Championships on the PGA Tour. But when Woods decided not to play at Kapalua because he wanted a long break, Williams was free to drive.

It was held Monday and Tuesday at Baypark in Tauranga, and Williams thought he was done after a collision sent his car airborne and on top of another car during the first of two qualifying heats.

"That realistically ended my chances," he said. "I started the second heat in the back of the grid and had to finish first or second to get into the finals. I made it past the second car in the last 50 feet. The best driving of my life."

After two more qualifying runs Tuesday for starting positions, Williams was on the inside of the front row. He took the lead on the third of 25 laps and led the rest of the way.

"I wouldn't have been able to compete if Tiger played in the Mercedes," Williams said. "To get in the way I did, then have the best drive of my speedway career, it was awesome." *AP*

Singh seeks to steal march on absentees

KAPALUA, HAWAII—WORLD NO. 2 Vijay Singh heads the field for the PGA Tour season-opening Mercedes Championships here this week, seeking to steal a march on a host of high-profile absentees that includes Tiger Wood.

Woods, Phil Mickelson and South African Retief Goosen are skipping the season opener, while South African Ernie Els isn't eligible for the winners only event.

That leaves Singh heading a 28-man field that also includes Sergio Garcia and Jim Furyk.

"I just don't understand," Fred Funk said of the missing in action. "It's such a reward for having a good year last year. Mercedes is putting up a lot of money and they want to see your marquee guys. It would make a sponsor say 'why am I doing this'?

"The way our bylaws are, we're independent contractors, you can't make a guy go anywhere but the problem is even more magnified because it's such a small field. It hurts when you have 32 or 33 guys and four don't show up."

Mark Calcavecchia admitted he stood to gain by the no shows.

"I text-messaged Tiger and said 'no Hawaii for you, more cash for me. Thanks for not playing,'" Calcavecchia said. "It's good for me, bad for the tournament. I don't have to beat Tiger, Phil, Retief or Padraig (Harrington, another absentee). I wish they were here though, and I think they should be here. It's bad for the tournament. They should have to play."

Calcavecchia also questioned why the big boys couldn't play here. *AFP*

James powers Cavaliers over Bucks; Raptors win

PHOENIX Suns' James Jones (22) scores off Philadelphia 76ers' Kyle Korver in their NBA game in Phoenix, Arizona. REUTERS

SUNS
22
KORVER
26

MILWAUKEE—LEBRON JAMES SCORED 17 of his 32 points in the fourth quarter to lead the Cleveland Cavaliers over the Milwaukee Bucks, 91-84, in the NBA on Wednesday.

James added 11 rebounds and 11 assists for his sixth career triple double.

"LeBron continues to amaze me," first-year coach Mike Brown said. "He got a triple-double tonight which was awesome. It's easy to take him for granted when he does because it just seems so natural for him."

Donyell Marshall scored 17 points and grabbed nine rebounds off the bench to help the Cavaliers snap a seven-game losing streak in Milwaukee.

Michael Redd led the Bucks with 28 points and Bobby Simmons added 18. Jamaal Magloire had 13 points and 12 rebounds. However, the Bucks bench went scoreless.

The last time the Bucks' bench was scoreless was Nov. 27, 1970 against the New York Knicks.

At Toronto, rookie Charlie Villanueva scored 24 points and Toronto shot a franchise record 63 percent from the field in a 121-97 rout of Orlando.

The Raptors (10-22) own the third-worst record in the NBA, but tied a season-high in points and outrebounded the Magic 34-21.

Mike James added 17 points and seven assists for the Raptors, who have won four in a row for the first time since Dec. 2-9, 2003.

Jameer Nelson had a career-high 31 points for the Magic, who placed forward Grant Hill on the inactive list before game because of a strained groin.

At Boston, Paul Pierce had 31 points, 10 assists and eight rebounds and Ricky Davis added 23 points to help Boston beat Charlotte, 109-106.

Orien Greene's driving layup with 57.5 seconds left in the fourth quarter broke a 102-102 tie and gave the Celtics the lead for good. Bernard Robinson missed a potential game-tying 3-pointer at the buzzer.

Boston shot 57 percent from the field to win for just the second time in six games following a 1-4 road road trip. The Celtics have won three straight at home.

Primoz Brezec had 19 points and Brevin Knight added 18 points and 12 assists for the Bobcats, who scored 35 points off turnovers.

At Oklahoma City, Desmond Mason scored 24 points and New Orleans overcame Dwyane Wade's second career triple-double for a 107-92 win against Miami. *AP*

Complete results

Toronto 121, Orlando 97; Boston 109, Charlotte 106; Cleveland 91, Milwaukee 84; Minnesota 91, Dallas 78; N.O./ Oklahoma City 107, Miami 92.

IVERSON sits on the bench during the fourth quarter of their game against the Suns. REUTERS

Hingis fights way into semis of Aussie hardcourt tourney

HINGIS revs up for the Australian Open. REUTERS

GOLD COAST, AUSTRALIA—MARTINA Hingis fought her way into the semifinals of the Australian women's hardcourt tournament Thursday, defeating Spain's Nuria Llagostera Vives in three sets.

The former world No. 1, who is making her comeback to professional tennis at the Gold Coast tournament after retiring due to injury three years ago, beat Llagostera Vives 6-2, 4-6, 6-0 to advance to the final four.

Hingis, a five-time Grand Slam champion, took just over 30 minutes to claim the first set but the Spaniard staged a determined performance to take the second.

Llagostera Vives crumbled in the decider, making too many unforced errors to stop the Hingis advance.

The 25-year-old Swiss champion will now play either her doubles partner Tatiana Golovin of France or Italy's Flavia Pennetta in the semi-final.

World No. 20 Dinara Safina will meet either defending champion Patty Schnyder or Lucie Safarova of the Czech Republic in the semi-finals after beating Spaniard Anabel Medina Garrigues 6-1, 6-3 earlier Thursday.

Hingis, who retired in 2002 with heel, foot and ankle injuries, has shown gathering form since she ousted Venezuela's Maria Vento-Kabchi in the first round on Monday. *AFP*

Iverson keen on playing for US five

PHOENIX—NBA STAR ALLEN IVERSON WANTS to be a part of the US basketball team for the 2006 world championships and 2008 Olympics, USA Basketball managing director Jerry Colangelo said.

"He wants to win a gold medal," said Colangelo, the Phoenix chair and CEO, after meeting Iverson on Wednesday. "He said that very clearly. He said if asked, he would be honored."

Colangelo, solely in charge of developing the pool of players invited to the team's training camp, plans to meet this week with Shaquille O'Neal, Dwyane Wade and Tim Duncan.

Iverson was co-captain and the leading scorer on the US team that won the bronze medal at the 2004 Olympics in Athens.

"I want to play," Iverson said after playing for Philadelphia against Phoenix on Wednesday. "Obviously, we didn't get it done the first time I was a part of that team. If God blesses me with another opportunity to try it, it would be an honor. I would have a second shot at fulfilling one of my goals."

Colangelo, named head of USA Basketball after the team's poor performances at the 2002 worlds and 2004 Olympics, has made it clear that the US team would not be a collection of superstars hastily put together.

Instead, he wants a group, including role players, that would make a three-year commitment to participate in the camps and form a cohesive team for the worlds this year in Japan and the Olympics in Beijing.

Colangelo said he planned to announce the first batch of players for the camp by the NBA's All-Star break in mid-February. *AP*

Federer struggles past unorthodox player

FEDERER returns to France's Santoro. AP

DOHA—ROGER FEDERER SHOWED rare glimpses of irritation as he struggled to get past Fabrice Santoro, perhaps the tour's most unorthodox player, in the second round of the Qatar Open here on Wednesday.

The world champion with the glass-fibre temperament found the Frenchman's unique double-handed style and crafty mix of tactics so effective that he never once broke serve throughout a 7-6 (7/2), 7-6 (7/5) success.

Federer's skillful power was often still awesome, but he twice missed kills from inside the service line and once appeared to tell some of the crowd to be quiet.

There were also moments of unfamiliar frowning amidst the characteristic skill and grace although afterwards Federer denied that the mental battle had been a problem.

"The last thing I want to do is get frustrated and I never do," Federer countered.

"Maybe I used to when I wasn't up to it, but now I have proved myself so much that there is never a sense of frustration against anyone, no matter how big their serve, how good they are the net, or how good they are at mixing up their games, so that is a big advantage to have in my game."

Santoro's entertaining magic came from his ability to stroke the ball with slice on both wings, and suddenly to appear in unexpected positions to volley.

However, Federer was never in trouble on his own delivery, and took the first set tie-break with something to spare, by seven point to two.

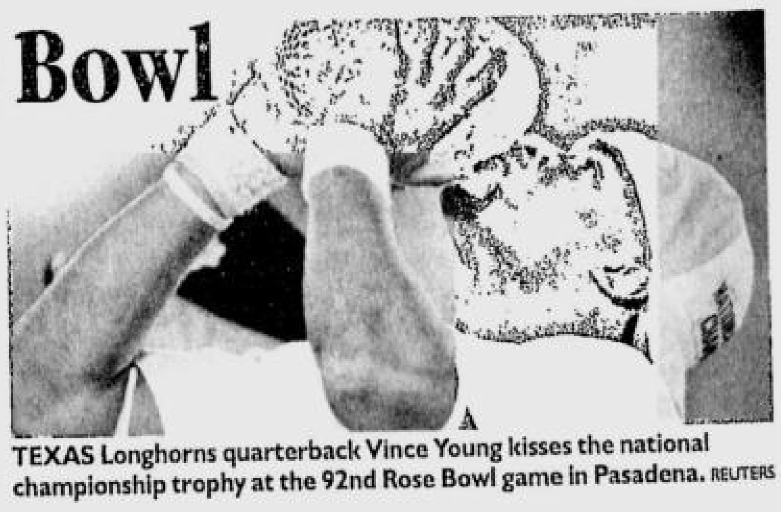
But he had more difficulty in the second set tie-break, going a mini-break down and then seeing Santoro save two match points and bring the scoring back with serve again at 5-6.

Federer then came up with a superb topspin return to the feet, making Santoro half-volley short, opening up the court for a backhand drive which the 33-year-old former champion could not contain.

Federer next plays Marcos Baghdatis, the first player from Cyprus ever to make the main tour, who scored a career-best win against Feliciano Lopez, the eighth-seeded Spaniard winning 6-1, 3-6, 7-5.

Lopez was the fifth of the tournament's eight seeds to go out. *AFP*

Young's touchdown hands Texas Rose Bowl



TEXAS Longhorns quarterback Vince Young kisses the national championship trophy at the 92nd Rose Bowl game in Pasadena. REUTERS

LOS ANGELES—VINCE YOUNG scampered eight yards for a touchdown with 19 seconds left, lifting second-ranked Texas to a 41-38 win over USC to give the Longhorns their first national championship since 1970.

USC (12-1) had a 34-game winning streak snapped and a bid for history thwarted. The Trojans were aiming for an unprecedented third straight national title.

"We couldn't stop them and the quarterback ran all over the place," said USC coach Pete Carroll, whose team gained 574 yards but surrendered 556.

Young was unable to bring the Heisman Trophy back to Austin but brought back a much bigger prize by completing 30-of-40 passes for 267 yards and rushing 20 times for 200 yards and three touchdowns.

He became the first player in NCAA history to pass for 2,500 yards and rush for 1,000 in the same season.

Texas (13-0) trailed, 38-26, after a 22-yard touchdown pass from 2004 Heisman winner Matt Leinart to Dwayne Jarrett with 6:42 remaining.

But Young scored on a 17-yard run with 4:03 left to pull Texas within five points.

The Longhorns' defense came up with a huge stop, holding bruising Trojans tailback LenDale White to just one yard on 4th-and-2 at the Texas 45 with 2:09 left.

On 3rd-and-12, Young threw a seven-yard pass to Quan Cosby and USC safety Darnell Bing was whistled for a facemask penalty, giving Texas a first down.

Young marched Texas inside the 10 but threw an incompletion over the middle, setting up 4th-and-5 from the 8. *AFP*

No increase in rentals of PSC facilities yet

By Marc Anthony Reyes

A WORKER applies the final coat of paint to the imported track of the decades-old Rizal Memorial stadium, one of the PSC-owned facilities used during the SEA Games. RYAN LIM

DESPITE ITS NEED FOR MORE income due to a slashed budget, the Philippine Sports Commission is in no hurry to increase the rentals of the facilities inside the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex and the PhilSports in Pasig City.

Executive director Guillermo Iroy yesterday said the agency is still reviewing the rental rates for the facilities which underwent massive renovation for the recent 23rd Southeast Asian Games.

Iroy, however, said there is still no order yet to implement the increase despite the fact that the rates have not been adjusted over the past five years.

"Of course, we need supplemental income and these facilities must be self-sustaining," said Iroy. "But we are still reviewing how to go about adjusting the rates."

The PSC rents out the track and field stadium, Olympic-size swimming pool, tennis courts, badminton courts, the Rizal Coliseum and the Ninoy Aquino Stadium inside the RMSC. The Philsports arena, swimming pool as well as the track stadium are also available for rentals.

Iroy said a 50-percent discount is given to schools and other organizations like the UAAP and the NCAA. The PSC charges full rentals only on private corporations or individuals like the PBA and the PBL.

"Right now, you can use the swimming pool for only P30 for the whole day, which is the lowest I know," said Iroy. "These are public facilities that used to be for free."

The PSC is counting on the House resolution filed by Rep. Monico Puentevella to raise the agency's budget from P26 million to P250 million each year.

Students cage meeting for wild card up

SCHOOLS INTERESTED IN CAPTURING the wild card berth of the National Students Basketball Championships are invited to attend a 3 p.m. meeting tomorrow to be conducted by officers of the Philippine Basketball Federation at the Philippine Olympic Committee office on Vito Cruz, Manila.

The meeting, to be presided by PBF president Mauricio Martelino and attended by vice president Nic Jorge and incorporator Joey Romansanta, will discuss the mechanics of play for the wild card in the collegiate division. The tournament proper kicks off in the third week of February.

"This is the first major undertaking of the PBF and we want this to be completed before the end of the school year," said Martelino.

Metro Manila has three seeded teams in the tournament—one each from the Universities Athletic Association of the Philippines, the National Colleges Athletic Association and the Colleges and Universities Sports Athletic Association.

The PBF has divided the national membership into nine basketball regions—Luzon A (north Luzon), Luzon B (central) Metro Manila, Luzon C (south), Luzon D (Bicol), Visayas A (west) Visayas B (east) Mindanao A (west) and Mindanao B (east).

This year's championships involve two brackets each in high school and college competitions.

Regaining RP's lost glory

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

BRISTLING WITH RENEWED ENTHUSIASM following the country's overwhelming victory in the recent 23rd Southeast Asian Games, Filipino sports leaders are taking steps to revitalize the national sports program in their quest for future sporting glory.

"Our immediate plan this year is to open the first ever Philippine Institute of Sports," said Philippine Sports Commission chair William "Butch" Ramirez in an interview, adding that national athletes and their coaches will be given educational scholarships at the sports institute located at the Philsports Complex (formerly Ultra) in Pasig City. The pioneering program will be launched on Feb. 14.

The initial phase of the free education program will cover short courses and lectures. The second phase in 2007 will offer two-year and four-year degree courses on physical education and sports sciences.

"The athletes and coaches' education will mark the start of very big things for Philippine sports."

The PSC chair had earlier announced the agency's main goals in the next three years, namely, to win five to 10 gold medals in this year's Asian Games in Doha, Qatar, this December; at least 75 golds in the 2007 SEA Games in Thailand; and the first Olympic gold medal in Beijing in 2008.

As one can see, the quest for glory is not lost on our sports leaders. They are starting the new year on a bright note with high hopes that the Philippines will rise again above the ordinary and regain its lost stature as a dominant force in Asian sports and a respected name in the world Olympics as well.

In the distant past, the Philippines was a country to reckon with in the sporting arena. Four times out of 10, Filipino athletes reigned supreme in the Far Eastern Games, Asia's version of the Olympics, dominating the triangular meet among China, Japan and the Philippines from 1913 up to 1934.

During the meet's opening in 1913, host Philippines won the general championship by garnering a commanding 141 points. The Filipinos won by a huge margin in athletics with 65 points as against China's 40 and Japan's 11.

The Philippines also won in aquatic sports, basketball, football, tennis and the exhibition sports of cycling and volleyball. The only event that eluded the Filipinos was baseball, which was won by the Japanese.

China ruled the second edition of the FE Games which it hosted in Shanghai in 1915 while Japan won the overall title of the third staging of the games which it hosted in Tokyo in 1917. The Philippines regained the championship in Manila in 1919 and scored an upset of sorts when it defeated host China in 1921 for the overall title, scoring heavily in athletics, swimming, tennis and baseball.

However, it was the year when the Filipinos lost the basketball crown (for the first and only time in the history of the Games), bowing to the Chinese due to bad officiating. Japan caught up with the Philippines and swept athletics, swimming and tennis at the 6th FE Games in Osaka in 1923.

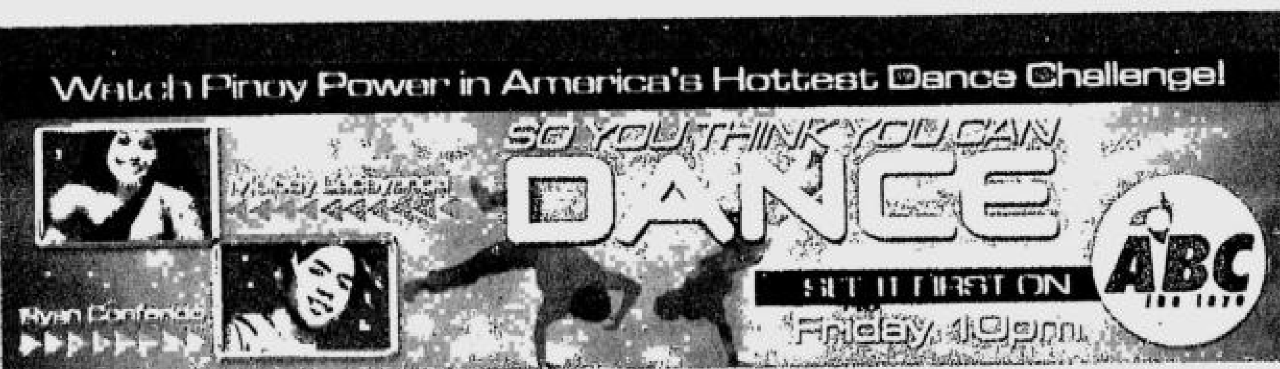
The Filipinos regained the championship in athletics and won in basketball, volleyball and baseball during the 7th FE Games in Manila in 1925 although it lost in aquatic sports and tennis. That was the last good year for the Philippines as Japan became the region's most powerful sporting nation until the last FE Games in 1934.

China and Japan hosted the eighth and ninth editions of the FE Games in 1927 and 1930, respectively, while the Philippines staged the 10th and last in 1934 at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

In the final staging of the games, the Filipinos won only the basketball, tennis and baseball titles, while the Japanese topped five sports disciplines, including athletics, which it won for the third straight time.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TV GUIDE

Friday, January 6, 2006



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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5			Winner TV Shopping		PBA				Sentro	PBA					Big News	So You Think You Can Dance		Rest Stones	
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Amazing Twins	Meteor Garden Season 2	TV Patrol World	Pilipinas Game KNB?	Mga Anghel Na Walang Langit	Only You	Vietnam Rose	Pinoy Big Brother	Kung Fu Fight Nights			Insider
AXN								PSI Factor (Season III)		24			E Buzz						
Cartoon Network	Johnny Bravo	Dexter's Laboratory	Powerpuff Girls	Tom & Jerry Show	Acceleracers GP			The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy		Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers	Battle B-Daman	Machine Robo-Rescue	X-Men Evolution	Samurai Jack	Justice League	Static Shock	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers
Cinemax				Hook					Dark Skies: The Awakening			Mad Max			Gargoyle's Revenge			Anger Management	
CNN				Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
Disney Channel	Mr Bean The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Sabrina, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr Bean The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Brandy & Mr. Whiskers		Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Ranger	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN	In The Driver's Seat	Pool/ Snooker Premier Snooker League '05				2005 St. Croix Intl. Triathlon		Boxing Series Friday Night Fights				In The Driver's Seat	World Tenpin Masters '05		Sportscenter Asia	2006 WPBA Cuetec Cues U.S. Open 9-Ball		Table Tennis '05 Killerspin	Sportscenter Asia
ETC		Simple Life	Knock First	1 Hr. Edited Version Of Today Show		Elimidate	Change of Heart	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	Arrested Development	GBB	Joan Of Arcadia		Average Joe		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
EWTN	The Word Was Made Flesh	Angelus (3:15 PM)	The Donut Man	Angel Force	Suffering And The Love Of God	Rosary With Mother Angelica	Stations Of The Cross	EWTN Gallery	Super Saints	Life on The Rock Encore		Marriage Works In Christ	Defending Life	Daily Mass (SAP) Live		Angelus (10:15PM)	Holy Spirit In The Church	Father Corapi And The Catechism Of The Catholic Church	
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	Date With Tiffany		Dragonball Z	Slam Dunk	Frog Prince	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Sugo	Etheria	Starstruck 3	Jewel In The Palace		Bubble Gang			Saksi
Hallmark Channel	Bewitched IV	Judging Amy		HCA: The Fairytaler	Sesame Street		Who's The Boss	Bewitched IV	The Nanny III	Changi		Judging Amy		Midsomer Murders Destroying Angel I			Doc Martin (10:35PM)		Strong Medicine (11:25PM)
HBO			The Fighting Temptations				Family Sins			Intolerable Cruelty				Outbreak				True Believer	
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Manny Pacquiao Sports Idol		Home Shopping Network		ME TV					IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	Family Guy	Stripperella	The Sib Show	WWE Smackdown				Sweat	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Mad TV		Joe Schmo Show						Worst Case Scenario	
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Ming's Quest	Intimate Portrait		Behind The Velvet Ropes	Life & Style		Guess Who's Coming To Decorate		Iron Chef America	
MTV Philippines	MTV Hits	MTV Live	MTV Hits		Trippin	Pop Inc		MTV Hits				Get Hitch'd	Get Spotted	Diyes		MTV Hits	Trippin	MTV Hits	VH1 Video Collections
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	OPM MYX	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	MYXLOG	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Club MYX	MYX Versions	Urban MYX	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX
National Geographic		Amazing Moments		Be The Creature				Top 5		Wow!		About Asia		Nat'l Geographic Specials		Amazing Moments		Hogzilla	
NBN		Value Vision		New Life TV Shopping		Teledyaryo	Divos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Sila?	GSIS Member's Hour		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)		Teledyaryo				Kamao		Bantay OCW With Susan K	
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues/ What Planet Are You From	Rugrats	Hey Arnold!	My Life As A Teenage Robot/ Right On Top	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Fairly Odd Parents	All That	Naturally Sadie	Romeo		The Fairly Odd Parents		As Told By Ginger	Rocket Power	Chalkzone	The Wild Thornberrys	The Angry Beavers	The Brothers Garcia
PBO			Buy One Take One				Hardline Salvage				Kufimim								Soul to Soul
Qtv		Bodyguard	Striker Hungry Heart	The Prince Of Tennis	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Star	Hotelier	All In	Laugh To Laugh: Ang Kulit	Ganda Ng Lola Ko		News On Q	Love Life		Groupee TV	
RPN 9	TV Shopping		Defenders Of The Earth	Hey Arnold!	Krusada Kontra Krimen		As Told By Ginger	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	WWE Smackdown		Cold Case		Medium		Newswatch Now	TV Greats On Friday		
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Sony Bmg Video			
Solar Sports					Watsons Water Challenge Day3					Sagupaan	NBA Jam	Sportsdesk	NBA Jam	NBA Game Pacers @ Warriors					NBA Inside Stuff
Sports Plus					Golf Hawaii 2004	ACC Basketball Boston College @ Maryland				Celebrity Poker Tournament 2				BD Acapulco	Xotic Xtreme	Inside the PGA	Golf Today	Mercedes Championship Day1	
Star Movies	Intimate Deceptions (2:45 PM)			Fish Don't Blink (4:15 PM)			Bridget Jones's Diary (5:45 PM)				3 Ninjas Knuckle Up			Pirates Of The Caribbean: Curse Of The Black Pearl					A Guy Thing
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Whose Line Is It Anyway?	Angel		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Friends	TNA Wrestling		The Collector/ Miss World		Angel/ NYPD Blue		Friends	Ultimate Force
Studio 23		Rave						The Batman	Justice League Unlimited	Wazzup Wazzup		Survivor Guatemala		Barkada Nights		News Central	Oprah		Just Shoot Me

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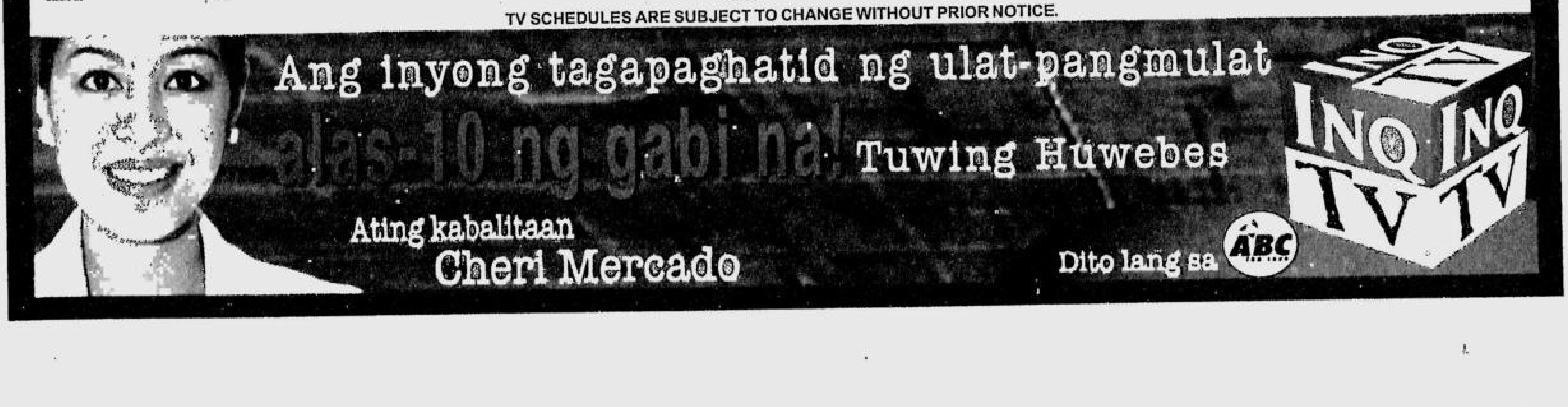

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Editor Emmie G. Velarde

Text us your feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

EVA Longoria

Letter from Steven, booklet from Tom, card from Eva

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales

LOS ANGELES—'TWAS two nights before Christmas, when all through our house, not a creature was stirring, except my wife.

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter. My dogs Tanya and Jasmine started to bark louder. "Who could it be, at half past midnight?" asked my wife. She sprang to the door to see what was the matter. When, what to her wondering eyes should appear, a messenger in a white shirt who had just dropped a parcel.

She picked up the envelope and gave it to me—in my cap (I had just settled down for a long winter's nap). I tore open the envelope and whaddya know—it was not a letter from St. Nick but from **Steven Spielberg**!

"Dear Ruben," it said. "I am extremely grateful to the members of the HFPA (Hollywood Foreign Press Association) for acknowledging 'Munich' with nominations for its screenplay as well as my contributions as director. We are all proud of the film ... I look forward to seeing all of you at the Golden Globes January 16th."

"Sincerely," Steven closed and dashed his signature.

That time of year

It was the time of year when I received cards and notes from nominees or from stars who just wanted to extend holiday greetings. The parcels don't normally come past midnight. They are usually delivered before bedtime by special messenger, FedEx, DHL, UPS and good old regular mail.

Tom Cruise's gift was a booklet titled

LETTER/ A2-2

ROUNDUP

Best Soap

GMA 7's HIT fantaserye, "Encantadia," was recently proclaimed Best Soap Opera in the 3rd Annual Gawad Amerika Awards at the Cultural Pavilion of the Celebrity Center in Hollywood.

Sunshine Dizon won Best Actress for her role as Pirena in the hit series. Former actor, Sen. Lito Lapid, received a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Gawad Amerika is a group of US-based Filipino journalists.

Denied!

THE MOVIE and Television Review and Classification Board has denied an appeal filed by the Philippine Cable Television Association Inc. on behalf of a cable TV channel earlier slapped with a one-month suspension for airing "programs not fit for public viewing."

A memorandum dated Jan. 3, MTRCB Chair Marissa Laguardia said TVE Channel "failed to properly monitor its program broadcast... and should be suspended."

The Board earlier reprimanded cable providers Destiny and Sky for airing "sex scenes" on TVE in the program "Dias de Cine."

TVE is aired on Sky's Ch 76 and Destiny's Ch 81.

'Idol' advice

HOW does an 18-year-old "American Idol" star stay fresh and pretty while traveling to seven countries in seven days to entertain the troops?

Diana DeGarmo says you sleep and eat on schedule — and it helps to bring along your mom.

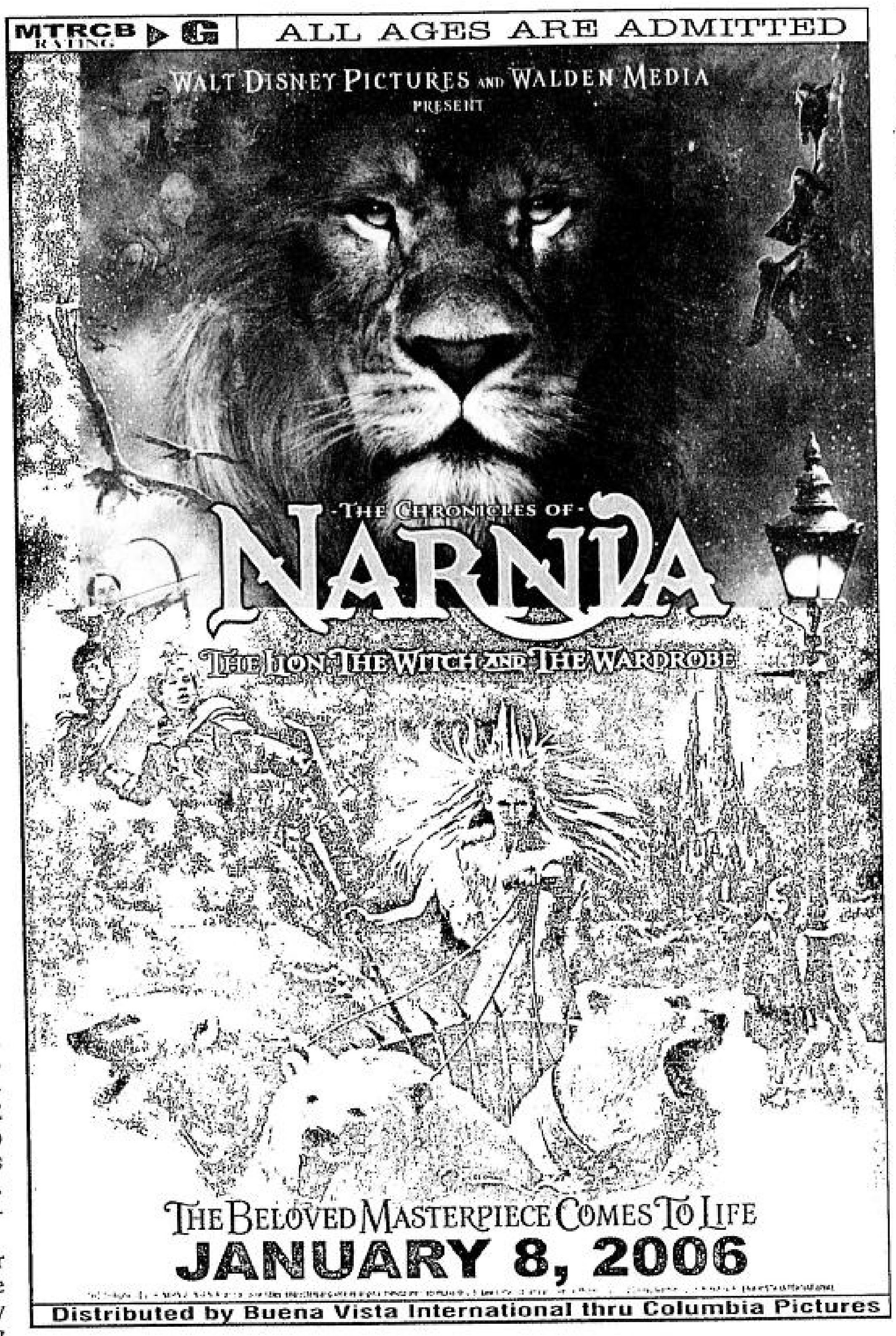
"Some people might call me a party-pooper," she told The Associated Press Tuesday aboard a military aircraft en route to Germany. "But you just have to do it."

DeGarmo, runner-up in last year's "AI," visited several US bases in the Middle East and Western Africa to host holiday shows. *AP*

Review

ABS-CBN's "Kontrobersyal," hosted by Boy Abunda, revisits tonight the show's most incredible and unforgettable moments in 2005.

The episode titled "Dos Mil Cinco" includes the stories on Boracay's garbage problem, prostitution at the Navotas fishport, and fake beggars.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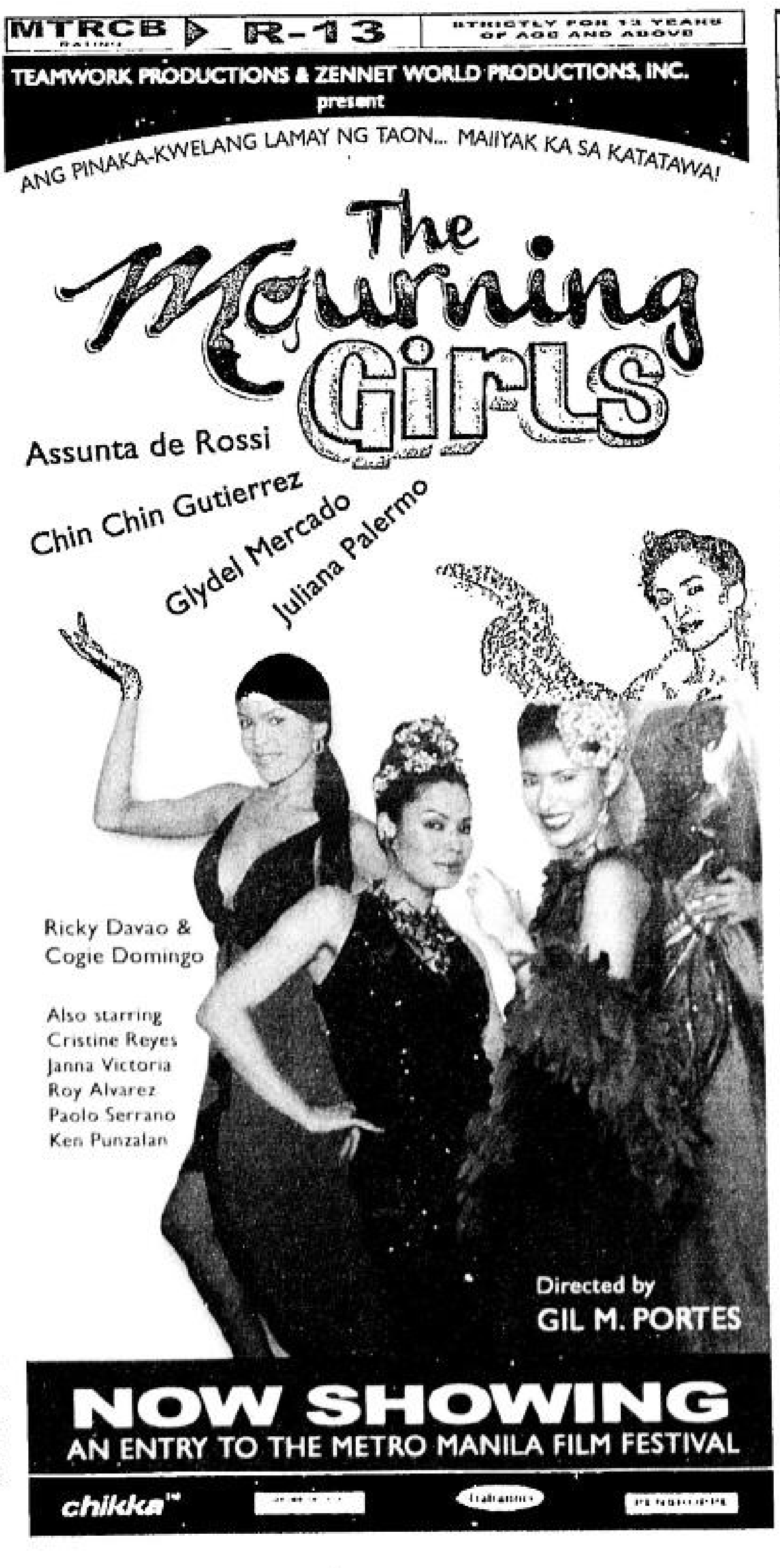
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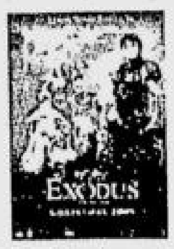
•Ako Legal Wife•

•Blue Moon•

•Enteng Kabisote 2•


•Exodus•

•Kutob•

•Lagot Ka Sa Kuya Ko•

•Mourning Girls•

•Mulawin The Movie•

•Shake, Rattle& Roll 2k5r•

•Terrorist Hunter•

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2 AKO LEGAL WIFE

MEGAMALL
1 EXODUS

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1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 KING KONG
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

METRO MANILA

SM MEGAMALL
1 EXODUS
2 AKO LEGAL WIFE
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
5 KUTOB
6 AKO LEGAL WIFE
7 MOURNING GIRLS
8 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
9 BLUE MOON
10 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
11 EXODUS
12 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO

SM CITY STA. MESA
1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 EXODUS
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
4 BLUE MOON
5 PETA
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
7 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
8 MOURNING GIRLS
9 BLUE MOON
10 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5Z

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
2 BLUE MOON
3 MULAWIN
4 EXODUS

SM VALENZUELA
1 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
2 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
3 EXODUS
4 BLUE MOON

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1 MOURNING GIRLS
2 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
3 EXODUS
4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
5 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
7 EXODUS
8 AKO LEGAL WIFE
9 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
10 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
11 BLUE MOON
12 KUTOB

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1 EXODUS
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
3 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
5 BLUE MOON
6 AKO LEGAL WIFE
7 MOURNING GIRLS
8 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
9 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
10 KUTOB

SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT
1 BLUE MOON
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
3 EXODUS
4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
4 KUTOB
5 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
6 BLUE MOON
7 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
8 EXODUS

SM CITY MANILA
1 MOURNING GIRLS
2 EXODUS
3 KUTOB
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
5 AKO LEGAL WIFE
6 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
7 BLUE MOON
8 AKO LEGAL WIFE
9 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
10 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
11 EXODUS
12 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO

SM SAN LAZARO
1 EXODUS
2 BLUE MOON
3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
4 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
5 AKO LEGAL WIFE
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

LUZON

SM CITY PAMPANGA
1 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
2 EXODUS
3 BLUE MOON
4 KING KONG
5 AKO LEGAL WIFE
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

SM CITY BAGUIO
1 EXODUS
2 BLUE MOON
3 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

SM MOLINO
1 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
2 EXODUS
3 BLUE MOON
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

SM CITY BACOOR
1 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
2 AKO LEGAL WIFE
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
4 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
5 EXODUS
6 BLUE MOON
7 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
8 KUTOB

SM CITY MARILAO
1 EXODUS
2 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
3 BLUE MOON
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

SM CITY DASMARINAS
1 EXODUS
2 KING KONG
3 BLUE MOON
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

SM CITY LUCENA
1 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
2 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
3 BLUE MOON
4 EXODUS

SM CITY BATANGAS
1 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
2 EXODUS
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
4 BLUE MOON

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 KING KONG
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
4 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
5 BLUE MOON
6 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
7 MOURNING GIRLS
8 EXODUS

SM CITY ILOILO
1 EXODUS
2 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
3 MOURNING GIRLS
4 BLUE MOON
5 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
6 KING KONG
7 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
8 AKO LEGAL WIFE

SM CITY DAVAO
1 EXODUS
2 KING KONG
3 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
4 BLUE MOON
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
6 AKO LEGAL WIFE

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
1 KING KONG
2 AKO LEGAL WIFE
3 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
4 EXODUS

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FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

'Blue Moon' actors have edge in MMFF's

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

SINCE THE METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL has generally become a popular rather than quality film fest, we wonder why it bothers to hand out awards for "exceptional" work. The reason must be that some people want to have their cake and eat it, too.

It's particularly frustrating to see stars jockeying for acting awards in the 2005 festival. Many of the film entries simply don't give them much opportunity to do any real acting, so why the fuss and bother?

How can you come up with an insightful performance in a fantasy epic, when you're upstaged by a flurry of astounding special effects? Nevertheless, there are those who stoutly declare that some actors in fantasy productions will romp off with major acting awards tonight. Now, that's—fantastic.

In a more reasonable universe, the acting awards should go to performers in dramas, since they are provided with a more sensitive, artistic venues for thespic excellence. Since "Blue Moon" is the only one drama in the festival, it's logical to believe that many of the acting awardees will come from this production.

Some people believe that **Marvin Agustin** has a good chance of clinching the Best Actor trophy for his tormented psycho role in the slasher-thriller, "Kutob."

While we admire Marvin's acting talent (he was excellent in "Maging Akin Muli" a month ago), we think his portrayal in "Kutob" was too obviously malevolent to be convincing.

Marvin should take heed of the dictum, "True art hides itself," and come up with a more judicious portrayal next time.

Others think **Zsa Zsa Padilla** should win as Best Actress for her feisty, over-the-top portrayal of the title character in "Ako Legal Wife."

While we think highly of Zsa Zsa as a
we can't agree in this instance becau
lieve she was miscast in her film fest

Zsa Zsa looks very *tisay*, and yet
made to speak in pidgin *Tagalo*
strongly suggested that she should lo
edly Chinese to be convincing. The
she didn't, makes her portrayal obvi
a performance, so Best Actress, she ca

Will the award go to **Cherry Pie**
the "lucky" wife in the same film? Ye
tress came up with an interesting and
ing characterization, but we believe
supporting, not lead, performance
should win in that secondary categor

All told, we think the ongoing jock
the festival's acting awards is trying-h

Even the actors who win tonight
pat themselves on the back too vigor
cause they shall have won over a rath
tinguished field.

'The Apprentice'

26 wishes for RP

THEY SAY YOU CAN'T TEACH AN OLD dog new tricks. Hopefully, that doesn't hold true for the dog-eat-dog world of show biz in this Year of the Dog. I asked some show biz movers and shakers what they hope to see in the local entertainment scene this year. Mine is to see *Kapuso* and *Kapamilya* stars all together in a TV extravaganza. Once they are on the same stage, those who truly stand out will... and those are just products of home studio hype will fade away.

Here are the top 26 answers. Let's all go *bow-wow-wow* and *arf-arf-arf* till the powers-that-be stop playing deaf to our pleas. Go fetch...

- A fully-sponsored digital movie film festival
- The "old charm" of movies that live on...
- Real class acts—enough of mediocre actors from talent contests who are just out to liberate their families from poverty.
- No-nonsense answers to show biz questions
- Radio stations playing more OPM
- More serious producers who will take bold initiatives
- A revitalized movie industry, and not just during film festivals
- More world-class local films
- An end to RP television's "copycat syndrome"
- Networks taking care of their entire workforce, not just celebrities
- No more overload of commercials and hard-sell "sponsored" portions in shows
- Less bickering among show biz denizens
- Show biz news that make the public more compassionate toward actors
- More artists making it in the international scene
- More gay-oriented films where the gay character is not self-loathing, dying alone

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A letter from Steven .

"The Gift of Human Rights." Printed on the booklet jacket was: "A donation has been made on your behalf to Youth for Human Rights International." A note signed by Tom and girlfriend **Katie Holmes** read: "Please accept this charitable donation and enclosed booklet as our gift to you and may you experience joy from knowing that this will enable more children to understand and enjoy the human rights that are their birthright. Enjoy every minute with your family and friends this holiday season."

Scientology quotes

The booklet opens with a quote from the late **L. Ron Hubbard**, founder of Scientology, of which Tom is a member: "Human rights must be made a fact, not an idealistic dream." Quotes on human rights by **Nelson Mandela** and **Kofi Annan**, UN Secretary-General follow. Enclosed are a human rights music video titled "United" and a DVD called "Learning Human Rights."

The rest of the booklet features relevant thoughts and drawings of kids, from 8 to 17, on the subject matter. Last year, Tom's gift was a plaque containing L. Ron Hubbard's Code of Honor.

I couldn't make out the signature on one other card. My wife Janet correctly deciphered that it was from **Eva Longoria** who finally got a Globe Best Actress nomination for "Desperate Housewives." Eva wrote, "Thank you for my early Xmas gift—my nomination!!!"

Eva's colleagues, **Felicity Huffman** and **Marcia Cross**, also sent handwritten notes.

One of the more interesting cards came from **Robert Downey Jr.**, star of "Kiss Kiss, Bang Bang." The card featured "Mithras," Robert's painting in oil, acrylic and magic marker.

Jane Seymour, too

Jane Seymour also sent a card of her oil painting which, according to the information printed on the back of the card, "was created by Jane...to represent the US Olympic Team participating in the 2006 Winter Olympics, Torino,

Italy." The
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1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
12:05, 2:35, 5:05, 7:35, 10:05
PG-13

2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
1:20, 3:45, 6:10, 8:35, 11:00
GP

3 EXODUS
1:10, 3:35, 6:10, 8:25, 10:50
GP

4 BLUE MOON
1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:05
GP

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MULAWIN
GP
12:20,2:50,5:30, 7:50,10:15

BLUE MOON
GP
1:05,3:20,5:35,10:05

AKO LEGAL WIFE: MANO PO 4
PG13
12:30,2:50,5:10, 7:30,10:00

ENTENG KABISOTE: THE LEGEND CONTINUES
GP
12:50,3:10,5:30, 7:50,10:10

MORNING GIRLS
R13
1:15,3:30,5:45, 8:00,10:15

EXODUS: TALES FROM THE ENCHANTED KINGDOM
GP
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CINEMA 3 MOURNING GIRLS - R13
11:30, 1:45, 3:55, 6:05, 8:15, 10:25

CINEMA 4 BLUE MOON
GP
11:30, 1:45, 3:55, 6:05, 8:15, 10:25

CINEMA 5 AKO LEGAL WIFE - PG13
11:30, 1:50, 4:10, 6:30, 8:50

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February 3 & 4 NINA&NYOY 9PM

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SHANG CINEPLEX

① ENTENG KABISOTE 2
MTRCB GP
12:20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00

② MULAWIN THE MOVIE
MTRCB GP
12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30 10:00

③ AKO LEGAL WIFE
MTRCB PG-13
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35, 10:00

④ BLUE MOON
MTRCB GP
12:05, 2:30, 4:55, 7:20, 9:45

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ABC-5 is currently telecasting the two editions of "The Apprentice"—**Donald Trump**'s original show on Mondays at 10 p.m., and **Martha Stewart**'s version at 10 p.m. on Tuesdays.

Trump's show is doing well, with this season's four remaining contenders cracking their skulls and busting their guts to win that prized job in the Donald's business empire.

Alas, Stewart's version is running out of steam, and we're told that the show won't have a second season. Still, its remaining contenders are giving the last legs of the competition everything they've got, and don't intend to bow out of the tube with a whimper.

How come Stewart's show doesn't have the "legs" of Trump's original program? The conflicting answers to that question will be hotly debated for months, but our take is that Martha was too weak and unfocused in the show's early episodes to give the competition the steely toughness it needed to be truly exciting.

show biz

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ı by others
eing true to themselves. Down
nage-building; no more secrets
ıild-friendly TV shows
on the capabilities of the stars,
heir personal lives
to reality shows that come
nreal" with their contrived sce-

phasis on love teams; they give
le wrong notions about love
for overexposed stars. Viewers
ık, too, from seeing the same

"texting promos" on TV
y're really just money-making

gers who really sing with soul
"*birit*" (our ears can no longer

redible talk show hosts (some
redible these days!)
on actors who can't sing and
can't act but try hard to
e to young stars and veteran
who don't act their age when
iewed on TV

promo

the New Year with Watering
promos—"4 a.m. to 9 a.m. P20
"All You Can Eat P80 Breakfast
9 a.m.). Watering Hole is right
gri-la Mall.
dback: e-mail wateringhole-
yahoo.com)

From page A2-1

ıctress depicted a Torino win-
pe. She also enclosed a family
ıer, husband **James Keach**
of **Joaquin Phoenix** and
herspoon's "Walk the Line"
r of actor **Stacy Keach**) and
en.
errence Howard handwrote
ge on Four Seasons Hotel's
ionery: "Thanks for taking
watch 'Hustle & Flow' (for
got a Best Actor nomination)
.' My work in these films was
eart."
or (he could be the next **Den-**
ngton) penned this line on
ge: "Keep your heart warm.
ve remain hot."
nd son actors **Donald** and
herland sent separate cards
: The elder Sutherland's
g is as tall as he is. Colin Far-
ture is the most striking of
nly is it as tall as Donald's
g but the strokes are ex-
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Roosevelt?

ot a card from **Eleanor Roo-**
n her White House address.
vas actually from Cynthia
played the beloved former
dy in HBO's "Warm Springs"
her sender and return ad-
leanor Roosevelt from 1600
ia Avenue.
the other folks who sent
vere **Maria Bello**, **Christine**
ckard Channing, **Toni Col-**
of Fil-Am actor **Alec Mapa**),
nkler, **Dolly Parton** and the
e TV shows, "The OC," "Ar-
elopment" and "House."
est one? The note from Nick
or of Wallace & Gromit, who
heir first feature, "The Curse
e-rabbit" after appearing in
ing clay-animated shorts.
ignature, Nick drew Gromit
humbs-up sign. As Wallace
"Crackin' toast, Gromit!"

the columnist at
5585@yahoo.com.)

OPENS JANUARY 18

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Jennifer ANISTON
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MULAWIN 2:10 / 4:40 / 7:10 / 9:40	ENTENG KABISOTE 2 2:05 / 4:35 / 7:05 / 9:35	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 12:30 / 2:40 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30	GLOBE PLATINUM CINEMA
AKO, LEGAL WIFE 2:10 / 4:40 / 7:10 / 9:40	EXODUS 12:30 / 2:40 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30	BLUE MOON 12:30 / 2:40 / 5:00 / 7:20 / 9:40	AKO, LEGAL WIFE 1:30 / 4:00 / 6:30 / 9:00
DOLBY DIGITAL-EX	MOURNING GIRLS 12:40 / 2:50 / 5:00 / 7:10 / 9:30	KUTOB 12:30 / 2:45 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30	ONLY P120 ADMISSION GLOBE PLATINUM P249/P299

ALIMALL CINEPLEX 5

1	ENTENG KABISOTE 2 12:30 / 3:00 / 5:30 / 8:00	2	MULAWIN 12:35 / 3:05 / 5:35 / 8:05	3	KUTOB 1:35 / 3:50 / 6:05 / 8:20
4	LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO 1:00 / 3:20 / 5:40 / 8:00	5	AKO, LEGAL WIFE 12:35 / 3:05 / 5:35 / 8:05		DOLBY DIGITAL DTS SDDS

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2 (DOLBY)	MULAWIN THE MOVIE GP
3 (DOLBY)	AKO LEGAL WIFE P13
4 (DOLBY)	BLUEMOON GP
PREMIERE	
(DOLBY)	CLOSED

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
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1 (DDS)	EXODUS
2 (SDDS)	MULAWIN
3 (DTS)	ENTENG KABISOTE -2
4 (GOLD DTS)	BLUE MOON
5 (GOLD DOLBY)	EXODUS
6 (GOLD SDDS)	KUTOB
7 (GOLD DOLBY)	BLUE MOON
8	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
9	ENTENG KABISOTE -2
10	AKO LEGAL WIFE

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1 (DOLBY)	AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 (DOLBY)	ENTENG KABISOTE 2
3 (DOLBY)	EXODUS
4 (DOLBY)	BLUE MOON

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216

1	MULAWIN
2	EXODUS
3	BLUE MOON
4	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL

Blue Wave MAR. JUNION
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927

1 (DOLBY)	AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 (DOLBY)	ENTENG KABISOTE -2
3 (DOLBY)	BLUE MOON
4 (DOLBY)	MULAWIN

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228

1 (DOLBY)	EXODUS
2	AKO LEGAL WIFE
3	ENTENG KABISOTE
4	BLUE MOON
5	MULAWIN

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Cinema 2000 Waltermart
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1	MULAWIN
2 (DTS)	ENTENG KABISOTE
3 (DOLBY)	EXODUS
4	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Binan) tel. (049) 4111146

1	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
2 (DOLBY)	EXODUS
3 (DTS)	ENTENG KABISOTE
4	MULAWIN

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	ENTENG KABISOTE
2	AKO LEGAL WIFE
3 (DOLBY)	EXODUS

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

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2	ENTENG KABISOTE
3 (DOLBY)	EXODUS
4 (DTS)	MULAWIN

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320

1	AKO LEGAL WIFE
2	MULAWIN
3 (DOLBY)	ENTENG KABISOTE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan)

1	ENTENG KABISOTE
2	EXODUS

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(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150

3	MULAWIN
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX)	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
5	EXODUS

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1	ENTENG KABISOTE
2	MULAWIN
3	BLUE MOON
4	EXODUS

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1	MULAWIN
2	EXODUS
3	ENTENG KABISOTE

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1	MULAWIN
2	ENTENG KABISOTE -2
3	EXODUS
4	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue
(Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)

1	LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
2	ENTENG KABISOTE

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	MULAWIN
2	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
3 (DTS EX)	ENTENG KABISOTE
4	EXODUS

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748

1	LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
2	EXODUST

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	BLUE MOON
2	MULAWIN
3	LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
4 (DTS)	EXODUST

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	EXODUST
2	ENTENG KABISOTE
3 (DTS)	MULAWIN
4	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
5	AKO LEGAL WIFE

THEATRES
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1	MULAWIN
2	ENTENG KABISOTE -2
3	AKO LEGAL WIFE

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121

1	MULAWIN
2	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
3 (DOLBY)	AKO LEGAL WIFE
4 (DTS)	ENTENG KABISOTE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
2	ENTENG KABISOTE
3	MULAWIN
4	EXODUST

Cinemagic Pacific Mall
(Lucena City) tel. 6605271

1	AKO LEGAL WIFE
2	ENTENG KABISOTE -2
3	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
4	MULAWIN

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489

1	MULAWIN
2	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
3 (DOLBY)	AKO LEGAL WIFE
4 (DTS)	ENTENG KABISOTE

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	AKO LEGAL WIFE
2	ENTENG KABISOTE

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1	BLUE MOON
2	LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO

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1 AKO LEGAL WIFE • THX
12:55 3:15 5:35 7:55 10:00

2 EXODUS
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
12:15 2:45 5:15 7:45 10:00

4 KUTOB
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

5 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

6 MULAWIN the MOVIE
12:20 2:50 5:20 7:40 10:00

7 AKO LEGAL WIFE
12:25 2:45 5:05 7:25 9:35

8 BLUE MOON
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

9 THE MOURNING GIRLS
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

10 EXODUS
2:30 4:50 7:10

ERMITA
536-7809 to 12

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

2 AKO LEGAL WIFE
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

3 MULAWIN the MOVIE
10:30 12:50 3:10 5:30 7:40 10:00

4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

5 BLUE MOON
10:30 12:50 3:10 5:30 7:40 10:00

6 THE MOURNING GIRLS
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

7 EXODUS
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

METRO EAST
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1 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL
1:40 4:00 6:20 9:00

2 EXODUS
12:20 2:40 5:00 7:20 9:30

3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
12:10 2:30 4:50 7:10 9:20

4 MULAWIN the MOVIE
11:00 1:30 4:00 6:30 9:00

5 AKO LEGAL WIFE
10:45 1:20 3:55 6:30 9:05

6 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

7 BLUE MOON
11:00 1:30 4:00 6:30 9:15

8 EXODUS

NOVALICHES
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1 EXODUS
2 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL
3 EXODUS
4 BLUE MOON
5 MULAWIN the MOVIE
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
7 AKO LEGAL WIFE
8 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

CITISQUARE MALABON
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1 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
2 EXODUS
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

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1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 THE MOURNING GIRLS
3 EXODUS
4 MULAWIN

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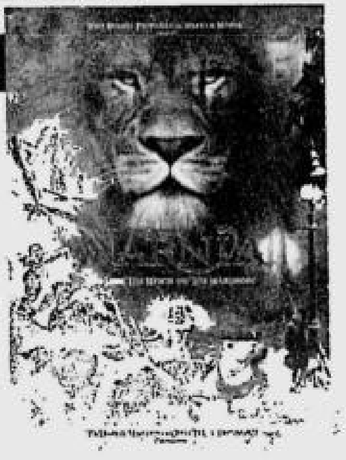

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2 EXODUS
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
4 MULAWIN the MOVIE
5 EXODUS

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2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
3 THE MOURNING GIRLS
4 BLUE MOON
5 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO

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1 KING KONG
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
3 AKO LEGAL WIFE
4 MULAWIN the MOVIE

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2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
3 MULAWIN the MOVIE
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5 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL
6 BLUE MOON

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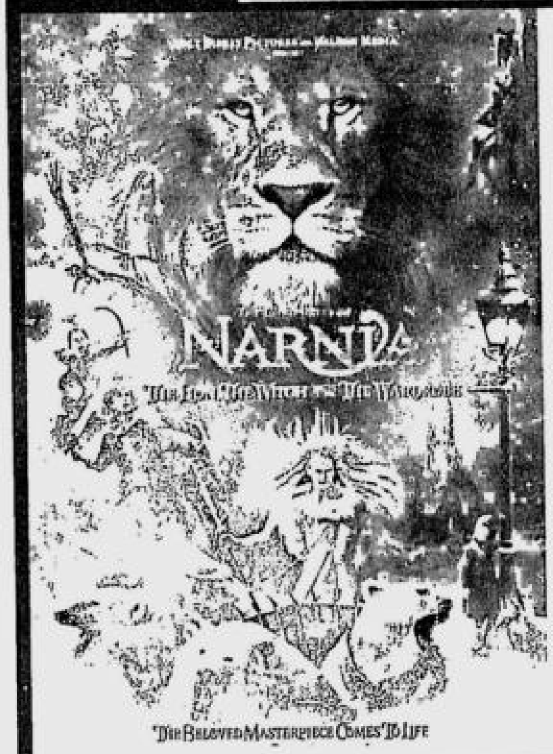
	4 MOURNING GIRLS	5 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL	6 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	7 EXODUS	
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 AKO LEGAL WIFE	2 KUTOB			
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX BLUE MOON GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX AKO LEGAL WIFE GUARANTEED SEATS			
	3 EXODUS GUARANTEED SEATS	4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL GUARANTEED SEATS	5 MULAWIN GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX ENTENG KABISOTE 2	2 BLUE MOON			
	3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL	4 AKO LEGAL WIFE	5 MULAWIN		
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	2 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL	3 EXODUS	4 MULAWIN	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③ AKO LEGAL WIFE
④ LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
⑤ MULAWIN

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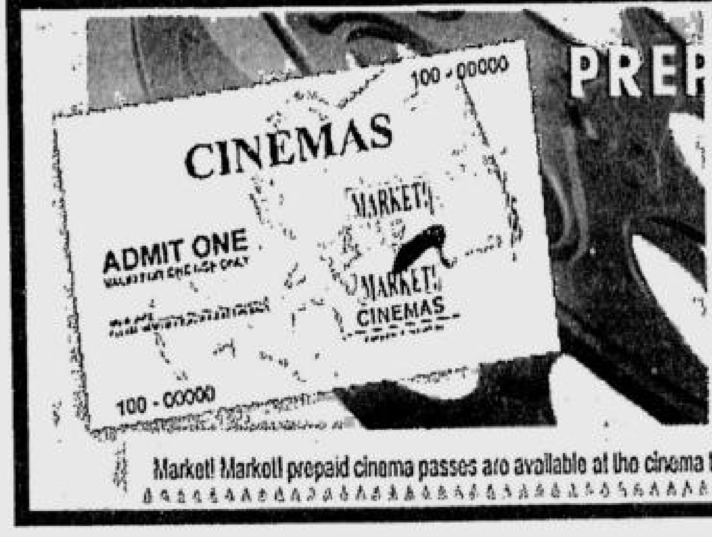

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WHAT'S INSIDE
Air Force One stories /B3
DMCI to invest in coal-fired plants /B5

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STP

Lower-than-expected '05 inflation greets RP

December rate also eases year-on-year to 6.6% on lower demand

By Michelle V. Remo

CONSUMER PRICES ROSE BY A LOWER-THAN-EXPECTED 6.6 percent from the previous year in December, as demand for food products and other commodities during the Christmas season did not grow as anticipated.

The 2005 December growth rate in consumer prices—slower than the 7.1 percent posted in November—brought the average inflation for the entire year to 7.6 percent. The full-year figure was better than the government's adjusted forecast of between 7.7 and 7.9 percent.

The 2005 inflation was, however, much higher than the government's original target of between 5 and 6 percent set early in 2005. Economic officials, who admitted as early as the first half of 2005 that the target would likely be missed, blamed the unexpected spike in oil prices last year for the higher-than-targeted inflation.

Data from the National Statistics Office (NSO) showed that products under the "food, beverage and tobacco" (FBT) category posted a slower annual inflation rate of 5.6 percent in December compared with 6.3 percent the previous month.

Annual inflation for clothing items slowed to 3.1 percent in December from 3.2 percent in November; for services, 10.1 percent from 10.9 percent; and for miscellaneous items, 3 percent from 3.1 percent.

Accelerated inflation was recorded only for housing and repair (H&R), settling at 4.2 percent in December from 4.1 percent the month before. The same goes for fuel, light and water (FLW), landing at 14.8 percent from 14.4 percent.

LOWER/ B5

Peso pushes envelop, hits 3-year high in intra-day trade

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO CONTINUES TO RISE, HITTING A three-year high of 52.31:$1 yesterday before closing at 52.585 to the US dollar at the Philippine Dealing System.

Giving up some gains after a sharp rally over the past few days, the local currency shed 16 centavos from Wednesday's finish of 52.425:$1.

The strengthening peso, softening inflation and easing of oil prices have put the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas under less pressure to tighten monetary policy.

Year-on-year inflation for December eased to bringing the 2005 average to 7.6 percent.

The December inflation rate of 6.6 percent, decelerating from the 7.1 percent posted in November, "was in line with the expected moderation of inflation," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said. "This will provide some elbow room for monetary policy, particularly given the easing of oil prices and the strengthening of the peso."

The statement was also made on the heels of bullish market sentiment fueled by expectations that the US Federal Reserve would soon end its spate of interest rate increases.

The BSP, which will conduct its next monthly policy meeting next week, jacked up its key overnight interest rates thrice last year for a total of 75 basis points.

Its overnight borrowing rate now stands at 7.5 percent, and the overnight lending rate at 9.75 percent—their highest levels in over three years.

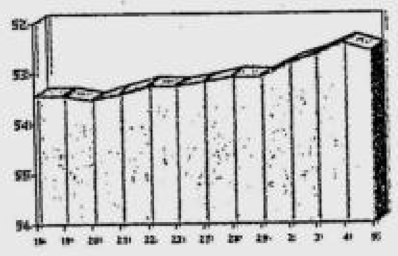
The BSP also increased the reserve requirement on banks by two percentage points.

But while the BSP chief hinted of neutral monetary action over the near term, he did not rule out factors that could threaten price stability: the level of liquidity, potential second-

AGAIN/ B5

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱52.585 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 5, 2006

¥115.84 = $1

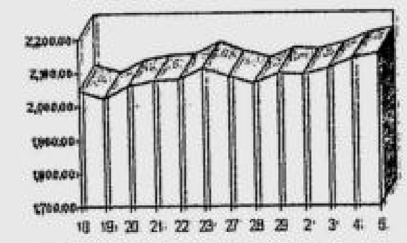
As of 5 p.m., Jan. 5, 2006

GOLD: $531.50-532.00

per ounce Hong Kong, Jan. 5, 2006

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Shares close 0.60% higher

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY rose for the third straight session, adding 0.60 percent to leave the main index at a 10-month high, dealers said.

Share prices retreated in midmorning trade as investors locked in recent gains, but buyers returned to the game before closing. Losses in telco giant Philippine Long Distance Telephone capped the upside.

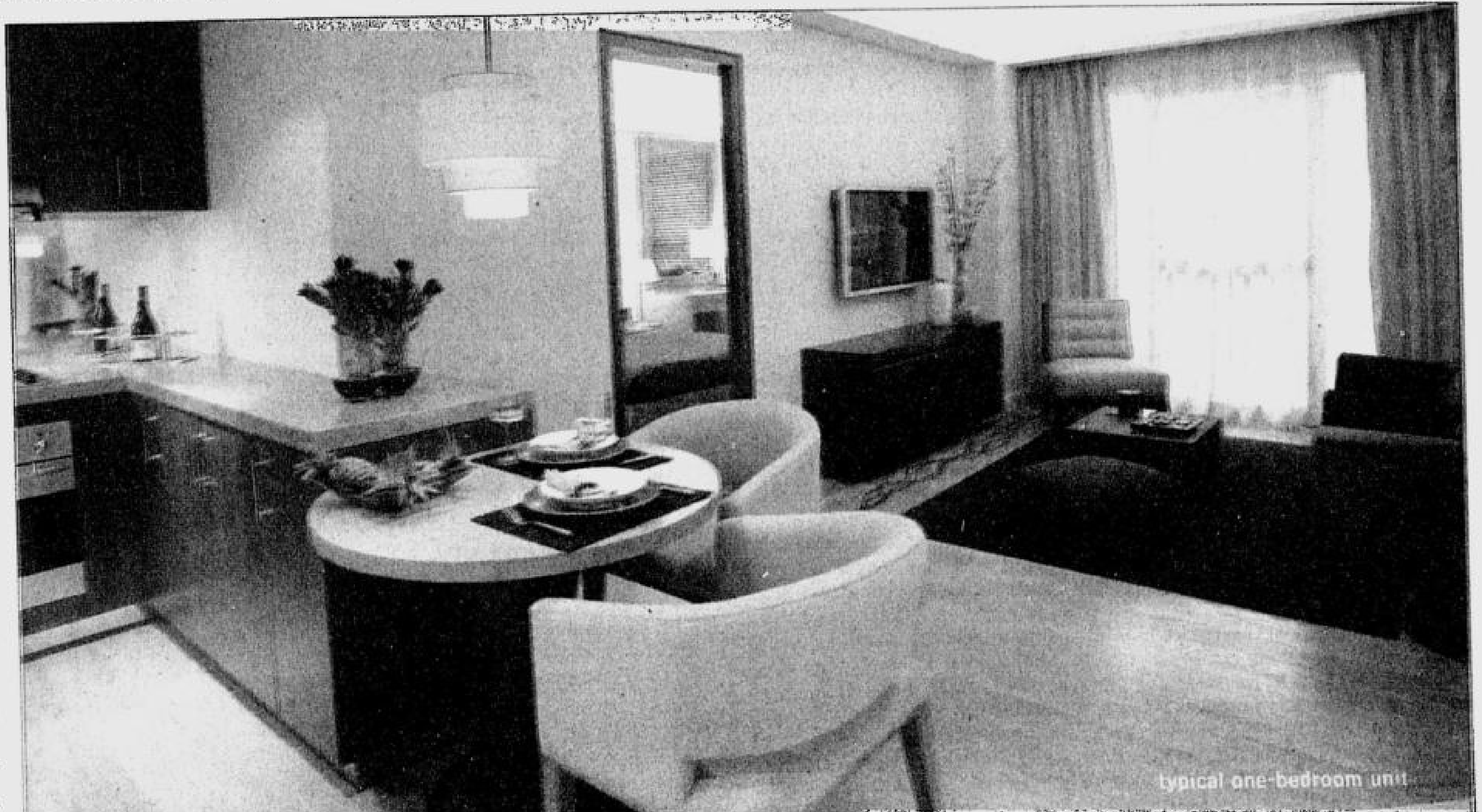
The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index was up 12.88 points at the day's high of 2,150.93. It hit a low of 2,129.34.

Volume was 535.1 million shares worth P827.5 million ($15.91 million). Gainers led losers 32 to 26, with 57 stocks unchanged.

The peso was at 52.43 to the US dollar in midday trade.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., the most actively traded stock, fell P5 to P1,845.

Shares of property developers and banks extended recent gains, with Ayala Land Inc. up 25 centavos at P10.50 and Banco de Oro Universal Bank up P1.50 at P35.50. Food and beverage conglomerate San Miguel Corp.'s A and B shares were steady at P65 and P89.50, respectively. *AFP*



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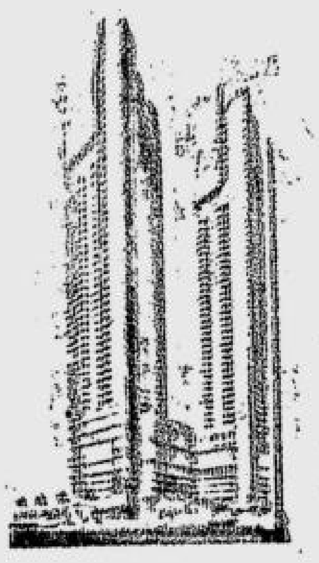

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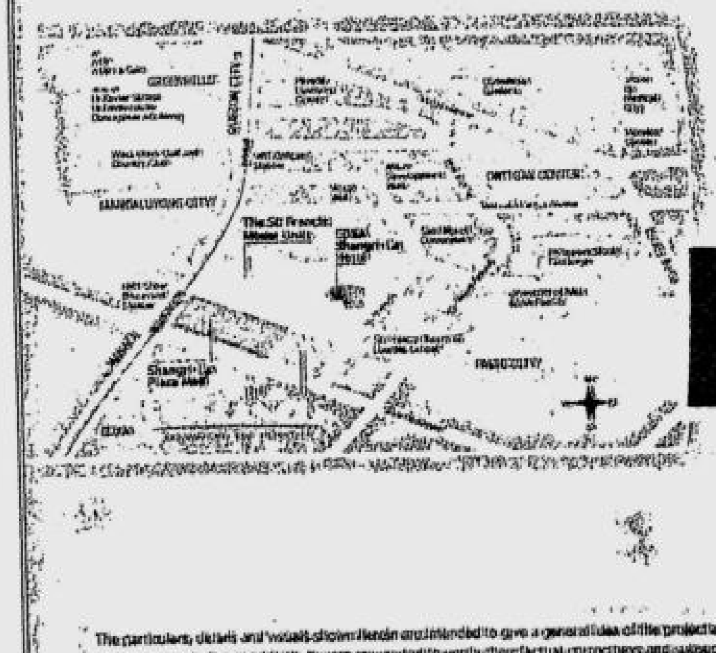

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A Development of The Shang Grand Tower Corporation.

[illegible]

Gov't raises $2.2B via bond float

70% of total foreign commercial borrowings programmed for 2006

By Michelle V. Remo

THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT SOLD $2.2 billion worth of bonds in the international market on Wednesday, raising the bulk of its 2006 financing requirement early in the year.

Doing the bond float early was a strategy to take advantage of lower interest rates amid positive developments in the country's fiscal position. Finance officials timed the bond float in January to avoid possible political risks in the months ahead that could dampen market confidence.

With this bond sale, the government has already raised about 70 percent of its $3.1-billion programmed foreign commercial borrowing for 2006.

"We took advantage of the favorable environment. We only have $900 million left, and we still have 11 months to think about it and look for proper timing," Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said in press conference yesterday.

Of the $2.2 billion worth of bonds, $1.5 billion were denominated in US dollars, while the remaining $700 million were in euros (500 million euros).

The US-denominated tranche, which has a 25-year tenor, carries a coupon rate of 7.75 percent, and priced at 98.641 percent to yield 7.875 percent. The yield has a spread of 335.5 basis points over similarly dated US treasuries.

The euro-denominated tranche, which has a 10-year maturity, carries a coupon rate of 6.25 percent, and was priced at 99.112 percent to yield 6.375 percent. Its yield has a spread of 309.6 basis points over benchmark 2016 bonds.

The underwriters for the bond issue were Citigroup, Credit Suisse First Boston, Deutsche Bank and UBS AG.

The Department of Finance (DOF) said in a statement that 40 percent of the demand for the dollar-denominated RP bonds came from investors in Asia; 25 percent, Europe, and 35 percent, the United States.

"This is a strong manifestation of the growing international investor confidence that is solidifying on the back of sound macroeconomic and fiscal management by the administration," National Treasurer Omar Cruz said in the same statement.

The bond sale followed an announcement by the DOF that the national government's budget deficit for 2005 likely stood much lower than the official target of P180 billion. The DOF's forecast was between P160 billion and P165 billion, although Cruz said the final figure could even be better.

The announcement of the government's 2005 fiscal performance would be held on Jan. 16.

Asked whether the market's positive response to the Philippines' bond issue could finally create positive impact on the country's credit rating, finance officials said rating agencies were difficult to read as of the moment.

Officials said the government would simply aim to achieve its fiscal targets, noting that market sentiment was more important than credit rating.

Teves tells BIR to undergo major reforms

FINANCE SECRETARY MARGARITO TEVES said he wanted the Bureau of Internal Revenue to undertake major reforms this year following its poor tax-collection performance in 2005.

Teves said the BIR, which accounted for more than 60 percent of the national government's revenue, should be at the forefront of the administration's efforts to inject vibrance into the country's fiscal sector. The government should rely less on Treasury income to achieve its fiscal targets, he said.

The finance chief said that among the measures proposed to improve the BIR's tax collection were the tightening of auditing procedures and establishing tie up with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) for accurate figures on real income of corporate taxpayers.

The DOF would also ask the SEC to provide the BIR with data showing income of companies before paying taxes. The information would be compared with the income tax declaration made by the firms, he added.

Teves said the use of third-party information system would be maximized to improve revenue collection. Under the system, the BIR taps third parties, such as clients, to determine the accuracy of incomes declared by firms.

The DOF also wants the BIR to look for ways to improve tax collection from transport operators, he said. *Michelle V. Remo*

Devil in WTO detail

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

COMMENTARY

THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO) watch begins.

The WTO Ministerial Conference held last Dec. 13-18 in Hong Kong had some notable achievements. The WTO special and differential treatment provision was given substance through the two new categories of Special Products (SP) and Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM) for the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA).

We commend Agriculture Secretary Domingo Panganiban and Undersecretary Segfredo Serrano for taking leadership roles in achieving this breakthrough. For the SP category, developing countries can now designate "an appropriate number of tariff lines as special products, guided by indicators based on the criteria of food security, livelihood security and rural development." For the SSG category, we can have recourse to "a special safeguard mechanism based on import quantity and price triggers with precise arrangements to be further defined."

Blessing or curse

But as the saying goes, the devil is in the detail. Though the principles of the WTO are commendable, the detail of past WTO agreements has generally benefited developed countries at great cost to the developing countries. The latter has experienced slower economic development, lost jobs and increased poverty. The WTO delivered benefits such as providing mechanisms to guide international trade and penalize unfair trade practices.

The next six months are crucial. It is when the detail and whether the conference is a blessing or a curse for developing countries will be determined.

Private sector participation

Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Favila initiated a risky but pioneering policy of institutionalizing private sector participation in the WTO negotiations. With the support of DA officials, Favila, as the WTO Philippine delegation head, gave six Alyansa Agrikultura (AA) leaders official recognition as WTO advisers and a full WTO delegate status to one. The question is whether private sector participation will be continued in the next six months when the more crucial WTO negotiations will take place.

Nama bound rates

Currently, about half of the Philippines' 5,620 tariff lines in the WTO Non Agricultural Market Access Agreement (Nama) have no imposed WTO bound (or maximum) rates. This gives us the flexibility to implement appropriate tariff rates on these lines, which include 114 fishery products which now have a very low 7-percent average tariff rate.

In the WTO Hong Kong Conference, a proposal was that countries should have all their Nama tariff lines except for 5 percent, subjected to WTO bound rates.

Hearing this, private sector leaders suggested that Sec. Favila bring this up to the WTO body. The Alyansa said the 5-percent exemption was too low, and that important fishery products that needed the flexibility to continue their unbound tariff rates would suffer greatly. The Fair Trade Alliance (FTA) proposed a minimum of 20 percent, while the Federation of Philippine Industries (FPI) proposed 10 percent. To Sec. Favila's credit, he not only listened to these views, but brought the issue up in two important general plenary sessions.

Formula

Another example of a private sector contribution is the suggested quantitative formula by an Alyansa Agrikultura leader, done in consultation with a former French colleague of current WTO Director General Pascal Lamy.

A product's bound tariffs should never be below the rate that will level the playing field between the developed nation's combined government support of subsidies and tariffs, and those of a developing nation. In the past, developed countries have limited the definition of leveling the playing field to leveling only tariffs, without considering subsidies.

To illustrate, if a developed nation's product has 0 percent tariff and a 20 percent subsidy, while a developing nation's product has 7 percent tariff and 0 percent subsidy, the direction was that the developing nation's product should go down to a "level" 0 percent tariff. However, to level the playing field in the correct manner, the appropriate tariff for the developing nation's product should not be decreased to 0 percent but instead increased to 25 percent.

This is calculated by using the formula T=(1-S) / S, where T is the appropriate tariff rate for the developing nation's product and S is the subsidy rate of the developed nation's product. Thus, in this case, (1-20 percent) / 20 percent equals 25 percent. Modifications to this formula

DEVIL/B3

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of January 5, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	34	35.5	34	35.5	1,087,900
Bank of the Phil. Islands	56	57	56	57	909,200
China Banking Corp.	600	610	600	605	1,840
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	300
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	60.5	61	59.5	60	55,300
International Exch. Bank	20.75	20.75	20.25	20.25	81,100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	32.5	33	32.5	33	906,700
Philippine National Bank	32.5	32.5	32.5	32.5	91,700
Phil. Savings Bank	35	35	35	35	10,200
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14	14	14	14	8,500
Security Bank Corp.	34	34	34	34	42,100
Union Bank of the Phil.	31.5	32	31.5	32	61,000
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
First Metro Invest. Corp.	25.5	25.5	25.5	25.5	400
Manulife Financial Corp.	3130	3140	3130	3140	770
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	7,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2140	2155	2140	2155	1,810
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	53	53	52	53	803,000
Manila Electric Co. A	14.75	14.75	14.25	14.25	91,300
Manila Electric Co. B	22.5	22.5	22	22.5	111,800
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.5	6.6	6.5	6.6	2,371,000
Petron Corp.	4.65	4.75	4.6	4.7	3,021,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	20,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.65	3.65	3.65	3.65	110,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	41.5	41.5	40.5	40.5	102,300
Pancake House Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.65	3.65	134,000
RFM Corp.	0.69	0.7	0.69	0.69	8,030,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.34	1.42	1.34	1.4	294,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64.5	66	64	66	29,400
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	40,000
Universal Robina Corp.	19.5	20.25	19.5	20.25	279,800
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	200,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.33	4,230,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.78	0.78	0.77	0.77	1,090,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.4	4.55	4.4	4.55	2,615,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.77	0.78	0.77	0.78	100,000
CHEMICALS					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.74	0.74	0.71	0.71	180,000
Pryce Corp.	0.28	0.3	0.28	0.3	610,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.07	0.0725	0.07	0.0725	1,100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	322.5	325	320	325	290,920
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	100,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.85	4.9	4.85	4.85	230,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.12	2.14	2.12	2.14	1,473,000
APC Group Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	150,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	27,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.84	400,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.1	9.1	9	9	12,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.18	1.18	2,234,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.1	3.25	3.1	3.2	1,577,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.24	1.28	1.22	1.28	1,311,000
J.G. Summit Holdings, Inc.	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.65	1,102,000
Medco Holdings	0.36	0.36	0.31	0.31	980,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.2	0.215	0.2	0.215	150,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	9,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	1,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	20,000
SM Investments Corp.	242	243	241	242	126,400
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	40,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	3,600,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	1,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	10.25	10.5	10.25	10.5	10,462,000
Belle Corp.	1.06	1.08	1.04	1.08	6,404,000
A Brown Co. Inc.	1	1	1	1	100,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	361,000
C&P Homes Inc.	2.02	2.12	2	2.08	619,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.225	0.225	0.22	0.225	2,240,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.18	0.24	0.18	0.24	1,360,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.44	0.45	0.44	0.45	20,690,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	50,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.48	1.5	1.46	1.5	9,606,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.225	0.225	0.215	0.215	420,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	230,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	1,100,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.36	1.42	1.34	1.42	24,740,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.36	0.38	0.35	0.37	34,040,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.9	73,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	20,000
SM Development Corp.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	100,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.2	8.2	8.1	8.2	3,468,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.125	0.13	1,240,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	13	13	13	13	8,300
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.94	0.95	0.92	0.94	3,210,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	740	760	740	760	42,800
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	715,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1840	1845	1820	1845	66,200
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	70,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.049	0.0525	0.049	0.05	12,200,000
Philweb Corp.	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	7,700,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	50,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	9.6	9.6	9.5	9.6	275,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	5,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Manila Jockey Club	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	140,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	50,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	80,000
EDUCATION					
Ipeople Inc.	3	3.05	3	3.05	85,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Paxys Inc.	6.3	6.3	6.1	6.2	432,000
MINING & OIL					
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	20,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	10,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.8	353,000
Benguet Corp. A	7	7	7	7	60,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	6,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.22	0.225	0.22	0.22	620,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.25	0.26	0.245	0.25	4,060,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.018	0.019	0.018	0.019	116,600,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.029	0.03	0.029	0.029	60,600,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	49,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.4	1.42	1.38	1.38	4,798,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.9	1.92	1.86	1.9	9,891,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	28	28.5	28	28	24,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.25	0.25	0.24	0.24	410,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	500,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.185	0.19	0.185	0.185	200,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	50,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	15,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3.95	3.95	3.85	3.85	25,000
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(PDR)	13	13	13	13	189,400

CURRENCIES

January 5, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.824538	1.000000	52.4300
Japan	Yen	0.007108	0.008621	0.4520
United Kingdom	Pound	1.450115	1.758700	92.2086
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.106344	0.128974	6.7621
Switzerland	Franc	0.646240	0.783760	41.0925
Canada	Dollar	0.719116	0.872144	45.7265
Singapore	Dollar	0.501758	0.608532	31.9053
Australia	Dollar	0.615510	0.746491	39.1385
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.187685	2.653224	139.1085
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.219871	0.266660	13.9810
Brunei	Dollar	0.500236	0.606686	31.8085
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000086	0.000104	0.0055
Thailand	Baht	0.020384	0.024722	1.2962
UAE	Dirham	0.224504	0.272279	14.2756
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.212800	63.5871
Argentina	Peso	0.271453	0.329218	17.2609
Brazil	Real	0.357795	0.433934	22.7512
Denmark	Kroner	0.134056	0.162583	8.5242
India	Rupee	0.018442	0.022366	1.1726
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.218676	0.265210	13.9050
Mexico	New Peso	0.077996	0.094594	4.9596
New Zealand	Dollar	0.566966	0.687616	36.0517
Norway	Kroner	0.126275	0.153146	8.0294
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013804	0.016742	0.8778
South Africa	Rand	0.134189	0.162745	8.5327
Korea	Won	0.000826	0.001002	0.0525
Sweden	Kroner	0.107243	0.130064	6.8193
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025535	0.030969	1.6237

Crew completes purchase of Apex

CREW GOLD CORP. AND ITS PHILIPpine affiliate, Mapula Creek Gold Corp., recently completed their $6.6-million purchase of Apex Mining Co. and were now poised to fully take over Apex's management and operations.

Apex is seen adding more than 100,000 ounces of gold to Crew's annual output this year and up to 200,000 ounces by 2007.

Apex's principal assets are the Masara and Teresa gold mines in Compostela Valley in southeastern Mindanao, which are among the most prolific gold belts in the country.

Crew and Mapula Creek have been upgrading Apex's facilities and should start production early this year. It had mobilized three drill rigs to initially conduct 9,000 meters of resource-definition drilling in more than 10 sites and will be substantially adding more drill rigs this month.

This early, Crew also had undertaken community projects such as rehabilitating the Teresa Elementary School, improving a public walkway bridge, and supplying a service vehicle for school and community use. It had also established a tree nursery with the local government.

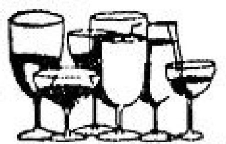
Crew's major mining asset is the high-grade Nalunaq gold mine in Greenland, which produces 100,000 ounces each year. Crew also has a 20-percent stake in the Barberton gold mine in South Africa equivalent to an output of about 20,000 ounces of gold per year.

Crew recently offered to buy Guinor Gold Corp. for US$328 million. Guinor operates a West African gold project in Guinea that is expected to produce around 300,000 ounces of gold a year in 2007.

With the acquisition of Guinor, Crew will have a projected gold production of more than 600,000 ounces in 2007.

Air Force One stories

COCKTALES



Victor C. Agustin

AIR FORCE ONE IS BUILDING A similarly humongous branch in Libis, Quezon City, barely three years since the airport-area establishment blasted into the scene to become the best KTV-men's "spa" in Metro Manila.

Ferdinand Topacio, lawyer for one of the Air Force partners, confirmed that the consortium of low-key Chinoy owners had already chosen a warehouse in Libis for the expansion.

Topacio declined to go into details, until all the regulatory issues shall have been resolved. Located near the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Parañaque, the one-hectare Air Force One complex had originally been designed as a shopping mall but the business was scuttled with the onset of the 1997 currency crisis.

Despite its out-of-the-way location, Air Force One has generated a buzz not only among the local patrons but even in Internet blogs worldwide.

Said to be the same group behind the successful Classmates KTV on Quezon Avenue's entertainment row, the Air Force One owners successfully improved the industry image with a combination of a live-performance theater that has attracted the likes of such stars as Ara Mina, Angelica Jones, Maui Taylor and Patricia Javier, tastefully designed private rooms and the acceptance of credit card payments even for "spa" services.

The ground floor even has a branch of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank and a 24-hour ATM for emergency cash withdrawals.

Following its airline motif, the spa is even named, in a nod to its target clientele, Flight 168—168 in Mandarin apparently sounds like "gain fortune all the way."

The private rooms, which come in first and business classes, even sport airline initials and flight numbers.

Money-go-round

- MACQUARIE Research, in its latest study of the local banking industry, has cited Banco de Oro, Bank of the Philippine Islands and Chinabank for their "strong balance sheets (that) would be in a good position to post better loan growth and profitability." Specifically, Chinabank was singled out as "the bank that should post the best cost-to-income ratio in (the) succeeding quarters."
- Taipan Henry Sy Sr. has been steadily accumulating shares of Belle Corp., besides Chinabank.

Heard through the grapevine

DOCOMO will initially acquire a 5 percent stake in Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., from, ironically, out of the 14.6 percent stake that its parent company, NTT, already owns in PLDT.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

Investment Funds of Wealth Builder and Wealth Secure	UNIT PRICES (in Php)	
	Jan. 2, 2006	Dec. 26, 2005
Fixed Income Fund	1.099351	1.094341
Balanced Fund	1.085572	1.085571
Equity Fund	1.055245	1.066650

These investment funds are specific to variable life insurance contracts and are not considered mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission.
The weekly unit prices are also available at www.insularlife.com.ph.

Devil in WTO detail

From page B2

should be made depending on the case being investigated.

Conclusion

The WTO watch begins. But this time, it will hopefully be done with meaningful private sector participation, which both Secretaries Favila and Panganiban encouraged during the recent WTO conference. With this combination, it is hoped that more of the angel than the devil will come out in the WTO detail being finalized in the next crucial six months.

(For inquiries or suggestions email agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax 02 8516635)

A New *Galleria* Lifestyle in Ortigas.

How do you like to have your favorite capuccino in the evening? Or Pizza Italiano delivered at your doorstep five minutes after you called the Pizzeria's direct line? Or have that slick suit dropped by, just in time for your company presentation?

Few reasons why you should own a home at the center of it all - *close to everything with the comforts and convenience of condo living.*

You can tell your friends about it or you can take it with you! The unique experience of living in a "Galleria" that is.

Such an experience can be hard to define and could be lost if one seeks its meaning literally. To some, Galleria is a destination, a cosmopolitan place offering the finest brands and services. Or a roofed promenade that refers to the very successful Robinsons Galleria Mall. Others today refer to a "new Galleria" as THE residential address and THE ideal home.

And definitions can go as long as the number of synonyms the word has. Galleria is more than a name, more than something felt...lived...and experienced. Today it is really about the people who come and live to the Galleria. It is the everyday life that comes with the diversity of every man and woman or family who has the privilege to enjoy the fun and excitement - It is the lifestyle...the experience...the comfort and convenience. All these, speaks of the word Galleria.

These are the many reasons why Robinsons Land Corporation (RLC) developed a "new" Galleria. The newest residential condo development to rise at the heart of Ortigas Business District - East of Galleria, is just a block away from Robinsons Galleria Mall. This 45-storey tower located along Topaz Street, Ortigas Center, promises a new level of urban lifestyle. Close to specialty centers, commercial establishments, banks, schools, churches and medical institutions, EDSA and C-5.

People come to the East of Galleria to take pleasure and savor each others' stories and exchange opinions and viewpoints. The Galleria offers the ideal ambience of home - just the right place that pinches the heart and creates lasting memories.

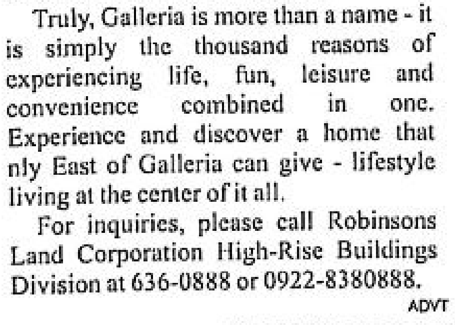
The new Galleria, after all, is not just a collection of homes and people, but a social "beehive", a community where people interact and compliment each other.

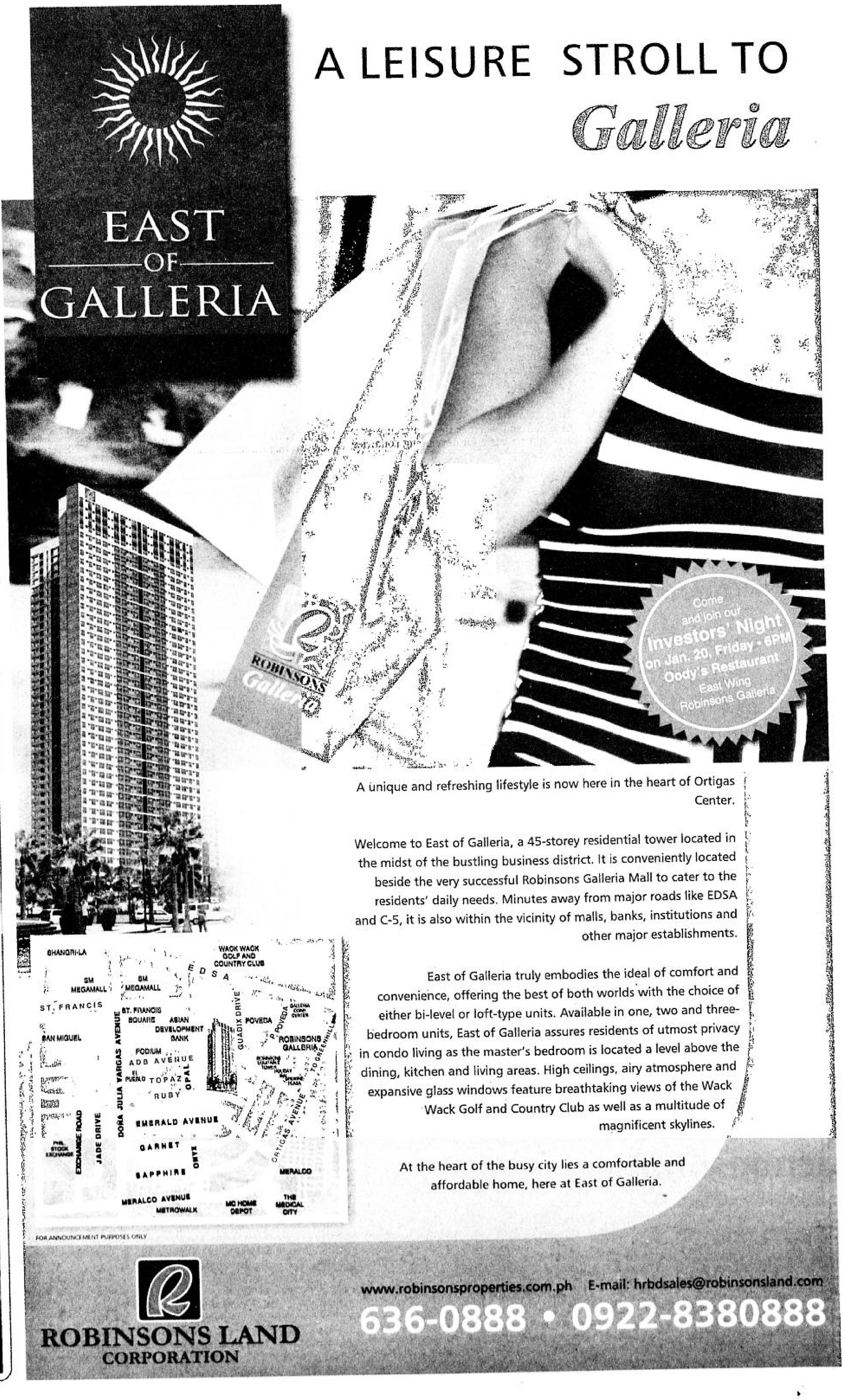
Residents can enjoy an array of amenities plus the panoramic views like the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club. Units are priced for as low as P2.2M and models are available in 1-BR, 2BR and 3-BR Bi-Level and Loft Types.

Truly, Galleria is more than a name - it is simply the thousand reasons of experiencing life, fun, leisure and convenience combined in one. Experience and discover a home that nly East of Galleria can give - lifestyle living at the center of it all.

For inquiries, please call Robinsons Land Corporation High-Rise Buildings Division at 636-0888 or 0922-8380888.

ADVT





A LEISURE STROLL TO *Galleria*

A unique and refreshing lifestyle is now here in the heart of Ortigas Center.

Welcome to East of Galleria, a 45-storey residential tower located in the midst of the bustling business district. It is conveniently located beside the very successful Robinsons Galleria Mall to cater to the residents' daily needs. Minutes away from major roads like EDSA and C-5, it is also within the vicinity of malls, banks, institutions and other major establishments.

East of Galleria truly embodies the ideal of comfort and convenience, offering the best of both worlds with the choice of either bi-level or loft-type units. Available in one, two and three-bedroom units, East of Galleria assures residents of utmost privacy in condo living as the master's bedroom is located a level above the dining, kitchen and living areas. High ceilings, airy atmosphere and expansive glass windows feature breathtaking views of the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club as well as a multitude of magnificent skylines.

At the heart of the busy city lies a comfortable and affordable home, here at East of Galleria.

FOR ANNOUNCEMENT PURPOSES ONLY

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BUSINESS *Friday*

Business Features Editor **Margie Quimpo-Espino**

Lucrative target markets for 2006

By Karen V. De Asis
Contributor

RATHER THAN complain about shifting consumer preferences and economic downturns, the more shrewd among manufacturers and retailers are focusing on the customer.

With their marketing-oriented approach, these manufacturers and retailers don't allow consumers to just dictate the trend and then follow with a multitude of like-minded competitors.

Instead, these retailers and manufacturers with foresight are shaping trends by knowing and understanding the customers' unmet needs and being first to address these.

Basic to understanding the market is to know who and which customer to focus resources on.

Concentrating on a primary market provides the manufacturer and retailer the means to optimize his resources and understand the customers' deepest motivations, needs and aspirations.

Here are some of the likely top customer markets for 2006 whose needs have yet to be fully attended to.

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

The indulgent woman

The new genre of females have newfound pocket power. Employed or otherwise, women by nature are resourceful in looking for ways to augment their family's income or indulge their personal and kids' needs.

In many cases, women have become the family breadwinner. A 2004 worldwide survey reveals that one of every four married women earns more than her husband.

Women also tend to buy more than men.

They are most likely to indulge themselves, their kids or family. With higher disposable income, they buy more reputable brands, and with more financial power, their purchases extend to big-ticket items like cars or homes.

Teens and tweens

Teens, 13 to 19 years old and tweens, 8 to 12 years old are favored recipients of their indulgent mothers' new financial power.

They exert a strong influence on their mothers' purchases, either for themselves, for their moms or the rest of the family.

Overseas Filipino workers

Christened the unsung heroes, their hard toil in a foreign land away from their families has kept the local economy afloat.

Yuppies or yocos

Marriage takes a backseat to these yocos (young cosmopolitans).

Career opportunities, freedom, extensive travels overseas are but some of the major reasons that keep them happy staying "urban single."

They are high-comfort seekers and are partial to digital lifestyles and convenience-driven products and services.

Hobo and soho

Home-office, business-office (Hobo) and small-office, home-office (Soho) micro-entrepreneurs hold offices in their own homes.

They move around, patronize business centers, coffee shops and business process outsourcing.

Once part of the corporate world, they have left the mainstream workforce to start new careers and businesses on their own.

Many are consultants engaged in various business disciplines.

Silent, astute workers, their clients include a who's who of new challengers to dominant, established brands.

Hobo and Soho micro-entrepreneurs are perfect targets for digital and mobile technology including all types of portable office machines and digital assistants.

Digital technology addresses their productivity and communication needs.

Mr. Mums

More and more men are becoming involved in parenting and housekeeping chores like house cleaning, marketing and cooking.

Their involvement in what was traditionally an all-female turf has slightly changed buying influences and decision-making in some homes and perhaps, some household categories.

Men are rational, loyal brand buyers. They rarely shift and go for reputable brands. They rely on word of mouth endorsements from family and friends. Nonetheless, insightful information on packaging labels may yet encourage them to try a new brand.

Male metrosexuals.

Judging by the number of cosmetic, hair care and skin care new product entrants, indeed male personal care products have come a long way in fueling the growth of the personal care category.

This phenomenon was earlier established in an ACNielsen Global 2004 report that reveals that the male population has boosted sales of personal care products specially in body cleansing and deodorants.

The baby boomers

The most populous generation is also the most vain. Aged 40 to 60 years old, this demographic segment is preoccupied with staying healthy and younger longer.

They have come to terms with aging but strongly believe that today's modern science can help delay, if not mitigate, aging.

Baby boomers are suckers for health and wellness lifestyles and products, invasive and non-invasive surgeries.

Silver-haired citizens

As modern science discovers ways to prolong life, and as the population over 60 years old soars, new categories serving the market are expected to grow.

Categories that have yet to be tapped locally include senior citizen shopping center, edu-travel, continuous learning and self-enrichment programs and silver fashion.

Muslim community

Muslim communities have a stronghold of at least 5 percent of the general population. While local manufacturers and retailers have yet to seriously address the needs of this group globally, marketers across different categories from ultra-chic fashion brands to personal care to technology brands are racing to address the needs of Muslims, presenting this group with products and services suited to their culture, tradition and lifestyle.

(De Asis, with website address at www.karendeasis.com, is a professor of marketing and brand management at the De La Salle Professional Schools Graduate School of Business and is chief brand strategist of Marketing Knowledge Series Training and Consultancy.)

Sta. Rosa launches Expo 2006

SANTA ROSA CITY—IN AN EFFORT to entice more investors and position the city as the "Rising Investment Capital of South Luzon," this city's government has launched the Santa Rosa Expo 2006.

Mayor Joey Catindig said recently that the two-week event slated on Jan. 9-18 would feature activities and expositions aimed at promoting viable business opportunities in Santa Rosa.

Already known as the "Little Detroit of the Philippines" as five of the eight biggest car manufacturers in the country have assembly plants here, the city is also fast becoming the "Call Center Capital" of the country.

Infonx, one of the largest call centers in the world, recently opened its facility inside Santa Rosa's Information Technology Business Park.

"This event is actually the first of its kind here in Calabarzon area. We want to showcase our city as the best place where businessmen can put their investments," Catindig said.

He said that aside from its proximity to the main business districts in Metro Manila, Santa Rosa also boasts of five industrial parks where investors can put up their facilities.

HONDA is one of five automotive companies with operations in Sta. Rosa, Laguna

Catindig said the city also prides itself in being among the most peaceful in the region.

The city, he added, hosts the biggest tourist destination in the region—the Enchanted Kingdom theme park, which, he said, attracts over two million people a year.

Catindig said Santa Rosa also has several high-end and low-end residential villages developed in anticipation of the influx of local migrants.

"Soon, our city will also be the 'Education Center' of the region as big universities and colleges in Manila are set to establish their branches here," he added.

The event would feature a motor show that would showcase the latest car models of Toyota, Nissan, Honda, Ford and Star Motors.

A display of vintage and sports cars at the Enchanted Kingdom is one of the highlights of the show.

Catindig said an investors' fair would showcase the ingenuity of Santa Rosa residents while the Bayanihan Festival is set to show the locale's innate trait of helping one another attain even the most impossible feats." *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Seminar on soap making set

PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD use soap every day. This is why there is great potential in the soap-making business.

The good news is that this is a type of business you can start at home and requires just a little technical knowledge.

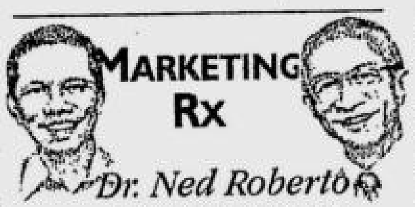
In line with government efforts to promote entrepreneurship, the Golden Treasure Skills and Development Program (GTSDP) will conduct a one-day seminar on soap making at UPAA Alumni Center, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City on Jan. 14, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Among the topics to be discussed are: theories and principles of soap making, sourcing of materials, costing and pricing of different kinds of soap.

There will also be hands-on experience in making different kinds of soap, such as liquid dishwashing soap, liquid hand soap, liquid all-purpose soap, bar detergent soap (all purpose) powder soap (all purpose), herbal bath soap (papaya, kalamansi, oatmeal, etc.) fabric softener, liquid bleach.

An added feature of the seminar is a free lecture on smart entrepreneurship (how to start and manage your own soap business). Those interested may call 952-29-34/ 952-40-28 / 913- 65-51 and 951-29-66.

Truth in advertising, service packaging, and 'tingi' marketing



MARKETING Rx

Dr. Ned Roberto & Ardy Roberto

Q: IF CONSUMER PERCEPTION is the primary basis for getting people to buy products and services, does this mean that truth in advertising is irrelevant in marketing?

A: On the contrary. What this means is that marketers ought to be extra careful in using consumer perception to motivate consumers through advertising.

As a marketer, you can use consumer perceptions for good or bad. Truth in advertising is good. Deception is bad. You can get away with it at first, but it won't last.

Consumers will, sooner or later, find out that they've been fooled. As Abraham Lincoln said: "You can fool some of the people some of the time. But you can't fool all of the people all the time."

Deception, of course, includes cases of keeping quiet about what you know may harm consumers. That's a case of withholding "truth."

Take the case of Merck's Vioxx, the acute pain killer and anti-arthritis medication, that had to be withdrawn from the market because Merck, or more precisely its medical researchers, withheld from publication in the New England Journal of Medicine knowledge of three heart attacks among Vioxx's patients participating in the large scale clinical study of Vioxx.

The heart attacks took place in the final five weeks of the trial study. The patients who had the heart attack were supposedly at low risk for heart problems.

But this was not the only thing the Merck researchers withheld. The study had apparently found "more cardiovascular problems potentially connected to Vioxx."

These problems were not reported in the published study. Such withholding of knowledge is highly unethical and a serious breach of the Hippocratic oath.

In pharmaceutical marketing, published clinical studies are a powerful "advertising" material for persuading doctors, such that withholding knowledge of the three heart attacks and the connection to more cardiovascular problems violated the truth in advertising maxim.

Q: Your column mentioned that the consumers' first physical contact with a consumer product is not with the product itself, but the packaging. That's why you said it's critical to give packaging more than the passing attention it's given. How about in the case of services? Where is the first physical contact?

A: Think of consumer goods packaging as the product's tangible presentation at point of purchase. So let's rephrase your question into: "For a service, what is the tangible presentation at point of purchase?"

We've written before that a service is intangible. To give it a tangible presentation, you need (in the words of Ted Levitt of Harvard) to "tangibilize its intangibles." How do you do that?

Experts in service marketing say that service is presented to customers through three things: (1) a satisfying service staff, (2) a satisfying service venue, and (3) a satisfying service processing.

So there you are. A service packaging has three dimensions that you must all satisfy simultaneously.

It is because of this inseparable, multi-dimensional character of services that marketers like to say that service marketing is much more difficult than consumer goods marketing.

Notice that one of the three dimensions of service packaging involves a human being. That's not at all easy to control in terms of consistent quality.

Q: In "tingi" marketing or low unit pack/sachet marketing, how do you determine the right size to offer?

A: This is one of those marketing problems where you cannot go wrong if you go by the "marketing concept."

It's that concept that says: "Always start from where your consumers are and never from where you (as marketers) are." So find out what your target consumers' preference is. Or look around for a benchmark. Consider, for example, shampoo.

The size of its sachet is a single-use amount for its target consumer, the amount of which has been validated by a product test.

Or take cheddar cheese, the low unit pack of which is a single slice.

The size and thinness was determined largely by moms of school kids bringing cheese sandwiches.

Or take the latest mega users of "tingi," namely, Smart (who pioneered it) and Globe (who followed suit after six months).

Both of these marketers have applied the low unit pack on SMS, the phone's so-called "killer application" and its "pasa load."

That pasa load's tingi started with P5 and based on continuing consumer demand, has now gone down to the unbelievable pasa load amount of P2!

So the key to answering your question are your target consumers. Consult them. Learn from them.

Keep your questions coming. Send them to us at MarketingRx@pldtDSL.net or text us at 0919-314-5412. God bless!

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

DA prepares lifestyle check on employees

By Christine A. Gaylican

TO TEMPER GRAFT AND CORRUPTION IN the Department of Agriculture, Secretary Domingo Panganiban has created an internal task force to conduct a lifestyle check on officials and employees.

"The delivery of services to the people had been hampered by corruption in the agency," Panganiban said. "By instituting reforms in the DA, corruption opportunities or vulnerabilities may be reduced or eradicated."

Panganiban admitted that this was a very sensitive operation, that his predecessors tried "to no avail."

The task force that will investigate charges of unexplained wealth and irregularities in the DA will submit its findings to the Office of the Secretary and the Office of the Ombudsman, for their evaluation and validation by the end of the month, Panganiban said.

Panganiban said he would accept recommendations and suggestions on how to go about the program from all employees to improve the DA's operations.

He added that an internal audit system would also be put in place to rid the agency of unaccounted funds for "ghost" projects.

"This has to be done to change the view of the public of the agency and it's high time that government service be made responsive to the public," he added.

He admitted that this effort was an offshoot of the investigation into P728-million in agriculture funds that were allegedly misused by former agriculture officials led by former Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn Bolante.

Panganiban added that the DA was also looking into reducing the number of its employees.

The DA has at least 1, 200 officials and employees in the central and regional offices who receive P1.6 billion in salaries from the DBM.

The budget excludes more than P1 billion in additional salaries for officials and employees deployed in DA's attached agencies.

"We want to remove redundant personnel," Panganiban said.

He said DA's central office in Quezon City was overstaffed and so were the other agencies, including the National Food Authority and the Philippine Coconut Authority.

Lower ...

From page B1

Although the 2005 inflation was slower than expected, analysts said there were a lot of risks facing the country in 2006 that could push up the growth in consumer prices.

Under the 2004 Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan, inflation for 2006 and 2007 was pegged at between 4 and 5 percent.

But Jonathan Ravelas, market strategist for Banco de Oro, said the average inflation for 2006 would likely hit the 8-percent mark.

"We see that the drop in crude prices was only temporary, so an 8-percent inflation for this year is expected," he said in an interview.

Ravelas' figure does not stray far from the National Economic Development Authority's inflation forecast of 8 to 8.5 percent for this year.

The analyst cited the risks of lingering weather problems, such as the recent hurricanes in the United States, that could dampen supply, as well as the continued economic growth of China expected to further increase demand for oil.

Also, the scheduled increase in the value-added tax rate in February, from 10 to 12 percent, is seen to have a slight impact on commodity prices, he said.

With the inflationary pressures seen for this year, Ravelas said, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas would be expected to tighten its monetary policy.

The BSP might raise its key policy rates every quarter by 25 basis points, he added.

The central bank's overnight .borrowing rate stands at 7.50 percent and the overnight lending rate stands at 9.75 percent. *With a report from AFP*

Peso pushes ...

From page B1

round inflationary effects, possible exchange rate movements due to excess liquidity and narrowing interest rate differentials, as well as adverse shifts in inflation expectations.

The BSP chief said the inflation figure for December, as well as for the whole of 2005, showed that the ongoing pressures on consumer prices continued to be largely tied to energy-related items such as fuel, transport and communication costs, and selected food items.

"On the other hand, demand-based pressures on prices remain subdued, as suggested by the sustained slowdown in core inflation to 5.8 percent in December," he said.

In 2006, Tetangco said average inflation was still expected to exceed the government inflation target of 4 to 5 percent.

"Inflation is seen to rise slightly in early 2006 as a result of the VAT (value-added tax) rate adjustment," the BSP governor said. "But the strengthening of the peso and the easing of world prices from their peak in 2005 should help cushion the impact of the VAT."

The peso, which appreciated by about 6 percent against the US dollar in 2005, has continued its upturn this year and is seen by currency traders as heading toward the 51:$1 level.

Aside from the strong inflows from overseas Filipino workers during the holidays, the peso has been lifted by favorable market sentiment, in turn, fueled by a rosy outlook on the government's fiscal position this year.

DMCI to invest in coal-fired plants

Construction giant considering $400-M investment in 5 years

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

CONSTRUCTION GIANT DMCI HOLDings Inc. is set to invest some $400 million in coal-fired power plants over the next five years.

DMCI chief finance officer Herbert Consunji said DMCI would put up power plants in Concepcion, Iloilo with a combined capacity of approximately 100 megawatts.

DMCI likewise plans to set up two power plants on Semirara Island that will contribute 400 megawatts of power to the national grid.

The investment in these power projects will come from a combination of debt and equity.

Consunji said DMCI has already informed the Department of Energy of its plans to put up the coal-fired power plants, with the necessary permits being processed for approval.

As part of its diversification into the power industry, DMCI earlier submitted its bid for the National Power Corp.'s 600-megawatt coal-fired Calaca power plant in Batangas.

The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation (PSALM), the agency tasked to sell the facilities of Napocor, will conduct a second round of bidding for the Calaca coal-fired thermal power plant, the first major asset of the government scheduled for privatization early last year.

The Calaca power facility was first offered to prospective investors last June.

But without a transition supply contract (TSC) to ensure a ready market for its electricity, two of the three prospective bidders pulled out, forcing PSALM to cancel the bidding.

Aside from DMCI, First Generation Holdings of the Lopez Group earlier expressed interest to bid for the plant.

The bid follows DMCI's expected higher profits in 2005 at P3.1 billion, buoyed by a one-time gain of more than P1 billion from the sale of shares in its coal subsidiary, Semirara Mining Corp., and property sales from its international offices.

Semirara already supplies coal to the Calaca power plant, but the bulk of the power plant's requirements still comes from imported sources.

Semirara has an existing contract with Napocor to supply coal to the Calaca plant until 2010.

The DMCI Group projects that 52 percent of its total coal volume will go to Napocor-run power plants.

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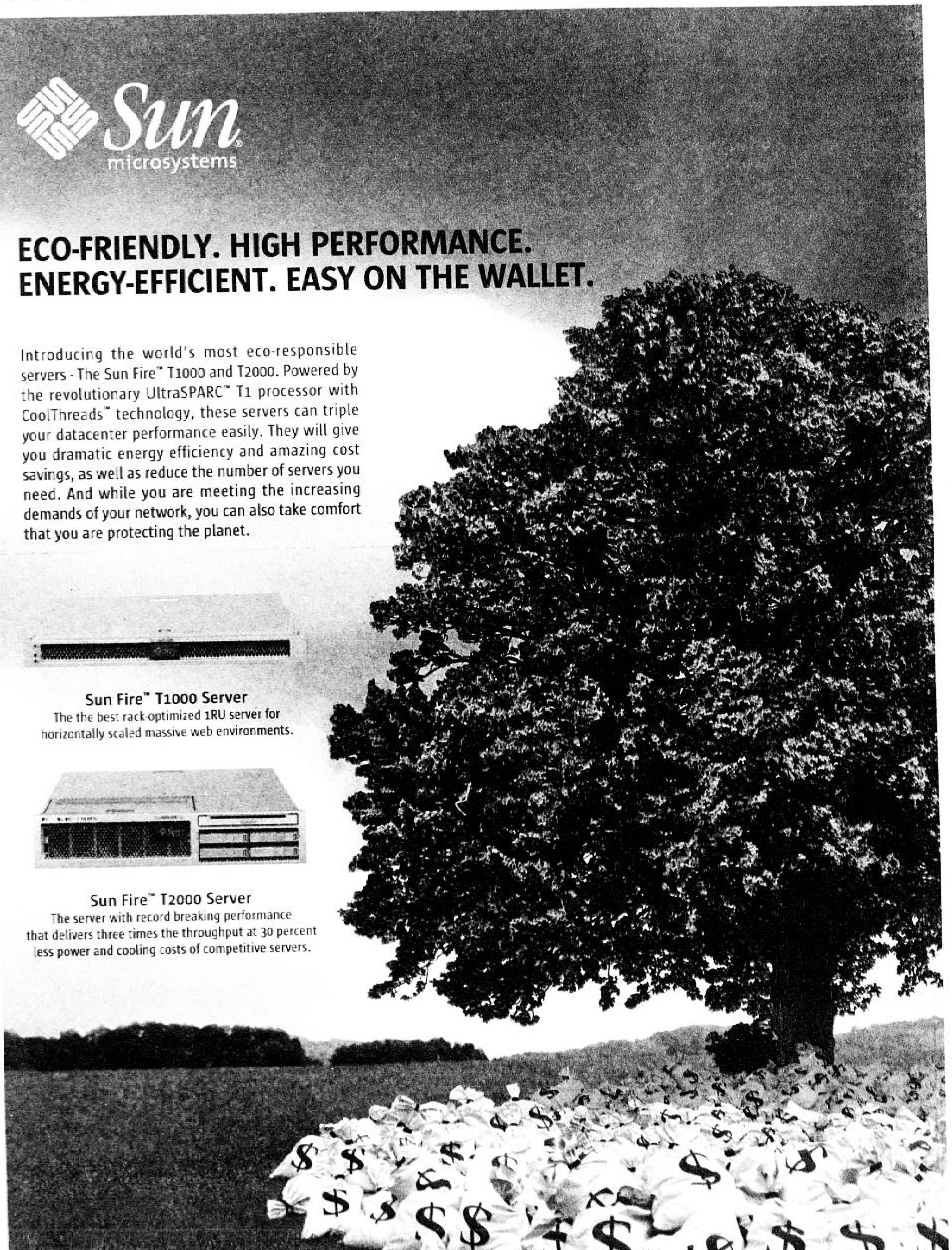
Investments of Variable Life Insurance Contracts	Current Week Jan. 3, 2006	Last Week Dec. 27, 2005
Bond Fund - Peso	1.35305	1.34278
Managed Fund - Peso	1.47345	1.46089
Growth Fund - Peso	1.12927	1.11363
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.2162	1.2076

* Note: These investments of variable life insurance contracts are not mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission



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Editor Aries Espinosa

Julie's marks 25 years of bread-baking success

IN ANY ENDEAVOR, SUCCESS is best measured by the fulfillment of the heart. It involves a shared sense of happiness that both the giver and the receiver gain. But the effect is even more fulfilling when things start from humble beginnings and commitments are constantly delivered.

For 25 years, Julie's Bakeshop (JBS), in its pursuit of service excellence, continues to bring fresh, hot and tasty bread for everyone. From Laoag to Zamboanga, Julie's has become a byword of good bread. It nestles at the center of the town and has even become a landmark of many communities all over the country. Truly, Julie's Bakeshop has earned a spot close to the hearts of the Filipino family.

Julie's industry leadership is manifested in innovations that enhance both its products and franchising business. These innovations broaden the franchisee's capacity to bring the product closer to the people. For example, a franchisee can build an outlet within the area of his bakeshop to make fresh bread even more available. There are Julie's mobile vans and peddling carts, which serve as rolling bread shops that deliver fresh bread to areas such as subdivisions and far-flung barangays. Julie's also has the first-of-its-kind frying station for fried pastry, which is an additional bakery facility where people can see the freshness of Julie's hot breads. Other product tie-ups include Julie's Cheese, which was developed because of its popular cheese bread.

Successful partnerships

Because of the initiative of Julie's management and staff, the company has successfully partnered with the country's top companies such as Coca Cola, Magnolia, Unilever Best Foods, Purefoods Flour, Selecta, Shellane, Bambi, URC, General Milling Corp, Pilmico, PLDT, Globe Telecom and many more.

To ensure that Julie's Bakeshop remains a strong company, it established bonds with relevant organizations such as the Philippine Marketing Association, Philippine Franchise Association, Philippine Association of National Advertisers, Association of Filipino Franchisers Inc, Bakers Associations of the Philippines, and Cebu Bakers Associations. Being an affiliate of these institutions strengthens its commitment to better serve the public through offering quality fresh bread and increasing its franchising business efficiently.

Truly, Julie's Bakeshop's success is not only measured in the fulfillment of its endeavors as a value driven franchisee business, but also in establishing harmonious relationship with the Filipino community. To date, the company continues to initiate or support various cause-oriented programs. Some of the past fruitful community activities that involved Julie's Bakeshop were "Leaders for the Future Awards", which gave tribute to deserving elementary graduates with exemplary leadership qualities; "Operation Smile", where it donated bread and financial support during the surgical operation of harelip children; and the yearly "Nutrition Month Feeding Program", in cooperation with the Department of Health and the National Nutrition Council. Other programs, which were supported by Julie's Bakeshop, were the "Walk for a Cause" and "Fun Run" as facilitated by the local government and non-government organizations. It has also extended help to several relief operations during calamities. Julie's has chosen to extend tangible support to the celebration of this year's Sinulog, through providing the most basic need, which is hot bread for visiting devotees staying at the Plaza Independencia's Devotees City.

With over 180 franchisees operating more than 500 branches and outlets nationwide, Julie's Bakeshop becomes one of the country's most popular and well-loved brands boasting an estimated market share of more than 60 percent in the franchised bakery business. This record of consistency brings Julie's closer not only to its vision "A Julie's Bakeshop in every town", but also to become a part of a lot of Filipino families.

Another Julie's Bakeshop's source of pride is its human resource, a strong team of highly qualified professionals ensuring high quality products and services. The loyalty to give the best and to contribute to the company's success is their main dedication.

Indeed, Julie's Bakeshop's achievement in its business and good relationship with the Filipino people is a measure of true growth. And the people behind this success are the real team players- the management and staff. Because of them, Julie's not only brings its bread closer to the people but it also boosts the capacity of the franchisees towards growth.

COURTESY CALL TO NEW INSURANCE COMMISSIONER
Sun Life Financial Philippines executives recently visited new Insurance Commissioner Evangeline Escobillo (4th from left). With her are (from left) SVP for sales Roy Yu, VP human resources Ed Salem, EVP Henry Herrera, president and CEO Lorenzo Tan, SVP and chief administration officer Riza Mantaring, SVP for finance Caesar Altarejos and VP for information technology Richard Lim.

Therapharma's gift to the country's future on simvastatin's 3rd year

THERAPHARMA, A DIVISION OF UNITED Laboratories, recently celebrated the third anniversary of the launch of its brand of simvastatin by joining hands with World Vision, an international Christian organization that sends poor children to school.

John Dumpit, general manager of Therapharma, handed over a check worth P150, 000 to broadcast journalist Karen Davila, a World Vision supporter and spokesperson, representing the company's donation to the organization's child sponsorship program. A week earlier, Therapharma donated another P150,000 during Vidastat's celebration in Cebu City attended by doctors from Visayas and Mindanao.

"This modest offering that Therapharma is making to the children under the care of World Vision is just a seed to start them on the road to a better, fuller life," Dumpit said during the anniversary celebration held at the World Trade Center in Pasay City. "These children comprise the next generation. They are the ones who will see us through when we all turn old and gray," he added.

Davila lauded Therapharma's initiative to bring about a brighter future to many of this country's children. "Therapharma does not only help patients lower their blood pressure and cholesterol but also many of our children who cannot go to school because of poverty. In this country, we need more companies like Therapharma," she said.

Also during the event, Dumpit reiterated Therapharma's commitment to make available quality and affordable medicines under its pharmacoeconomics program. "Our role in Therapharma is to help bring back the joy in patients' eyes by enabling them to enjoy their precious moments with their loved ones and live normal lives because they get adequate protection from their diseases through quality and affordable medicines," he said. "This is what we call pharmacoeconomics in action."

WORLD VISION
150,000
ONE HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND PESOS

JOHN Dumpit (center), general manager of Therapharma, pledges support to World Vision represented by David Liban Jr, marketing and public awareness manager. Also shown is broadcast journalist Karen Davila, a World Vision advocate.

Ellen's Aesthetic Center still going strong after 26 years

HERS IS ONE OF THE MOST FAMILIAR faces in the beauty industry. Hard to be missed are her imposing billboards scattered along Edsa and in other major thoroughfares all over the country. This woman epitomizes youthful beauty. And she's none other than Ellen Lising, president and chief executive officer of Ellen's Aesthetic chain of beauty centers.

At the age of 53, she has aged gracefully. Her positive demeanor matched with an awesome personality endears this lady to her friends, relatives and customers all the more.

Having been in the business for more than two decades now, Lising has successfully hurdled the rigors and woes of the beauty business. Through the years, Ellen's Aesthetic Center has become a fixture in the beauty industry as the place to go to for skin problems and other facial woes.

After 26 years, Ellen's Aesthetic Centers have sprouted like mushrooms. Her credibility and expertise speak for themselves for why she has lasted this long. Ellen never fails to update herself about the latest innovations on beauty and fashion. She attends conventions, conferences and skin care seminars abroad to keep her abreast with the current trends in the international beauty scene.

People from all walks of life have loved Ellen's expertise, from celebrities to politicians, beauty queens, office workers, and even students. In fact, most of the country's top actors and actresses have tried Ellen Lising's magic touch, and they are all satisfied with the outcome. They have become Ellen's regular customers and habitués in all its 12 outlets nationwide.

Every year, Ellen's Aesthetic Center introduces different services to its regular clientele, as well as her line of beauty products. To date, Ellen's whitening cream has been the bestselling product in all her 12 centers nationwide. It is the only whitening cream in the market that can miraculously erase dark spots of the body in just seven days. Ellen's other beauty products like facial soaps, toner and moisturizing cream are also selling briskly.

Ellen's Aesthetic Center's services include Skin Care (Ellen's basic facial, facial with hard mask, acne facial treatment, Bioptron Facial, Diamond Laser Facial Treatment, laser facial treatment, and warts removal with facial), permanent cosmetics (lips, eyebrow, eyeliner, eyebrow correction, and eyelash curl), whitening treatments (Body Micropeel, White Glow Body Treatment, Vita C Whitening Body Treatment, Underarm Whitening Treatment, Rose Essence Body Treatment, laser hair removal, foot whitening treatment, hair depilatory, and body, foot and scalp massage), non-surgical treatments (fillers, botox, bust and butt-lift), and surgical treatments (mesotherapy, tummy tuck, breast augmentation, breast lift, chemical peel, ear surgery, hair replacement surgery, dermabrasion, eyelid surgery, face lift, facial implants, nose surgery, liposuction, and male breast reduction.

ELLEN Lising with actress Elizabeth Oropesa

Ellen's Aesthetic Center has recently opened not just one but two outlets in the bustling city of Cebu.

For more details and free consultation, call hotline 413-3375 or 413-6357.

BPI, PILIPINAS SHELL IN P5.5-B MTL SIGNING
The Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) and BPI Asset Management and Trust Group (BPI AMTG), together with Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp (PSPC) recently held its P5.5-billion 3-Year Medium Term Loan Signing at BPI's Club 1851 in Makati City. The MTL was fully funded by BPI and BPI AMTG, and arranged by BPI Capital Corp. Leading the signing were (seated, from left) Caesar Collong, PSPC treasury manager; Victor Garcia; BPI vice president; Rodolfo Naguit, PSPC vice president-finance; Aurelio R. Montinola III, BPI president; Edgar Chua, PSPC chair and president; Adelbert Legasto, BPI senior vice president and BPI AMTG head; and Ma. Theresa Javier, BPI AMTG vice president. Joining them were (standing, from left) Jocelyn Sta. Ana, BPI Capital vice president; Carlo Nonato, BPI AMTG assistant manager; Pablo Payumo and Rosario Benedicto of BPI legal; Efren Legaspi, PSPC legal counsel; Cristina Natividad, BPI assistant vice president; Denis Sta. Catalina, BPI Capital vice president; and Aarne Dimanlig, BPI Capital assistant vice president.

INTELLICARE IN 'STRAIGHT TALK'
Mario M. Silos, Intellicare president (right) was recently interviewed by Cito Beltran, host of ANC's 'Straight Talk'. The interview focused on the HMO industry and the features and benefits of the Intellicare health card. Intellicare is celebrating its 10th anniversary with P2 billion health benefits paid and a base of 300,000 members. The company has over 7,000 affiliated doctors and dentists and 450 accredited hospitals and clinics nationwide. Intellicare, one of the top five HMOs in the country, is well known for its personalized, efficient and compassionate service.

New year sale at fashionable Manila's mall

START THE YEAR RIGHT! RUN TO fashionable Manila's favorite shopping haven because Power Plant Mall will be opening its doors to all shopping aficionados with a mall-wide sale from Jan. 6 to 8.

Power Plant Mall will treat you to a post Christmas celebration. Enjoy great discounts up to 70 percent off from premium brands of over 100 participating outlets marking down regular prices. Unearth the hip and fabulous this season for affable prices that will surely make your pockets rejoice.

Indulge in fine brands, which will be offered for up to 70 percent discount in establishments such as Anne Klein, Cole Haan, FCUK, Ferragamo, and CMG.

Find reasonably priced items from Lacoste, where the abundant selection of apparel, shoe and accessories makes you look casually chic.

Treat yourself to a stunning pair of Nine West shoes or even go crazy over its bag and wallet collection. And then adorn yourself with dazzling jewelries from Philippe Charriol or with striking accessories Evita Peroni.

And top it all up with fabulous fashions from Iberian brands Mango and Zara. Zara, which has taken Manila by storm and has brought shopping to a whole new level, will surely have Filipinos going gaga over their vast and marvelous collection.

A grand sale to open up the New Year is only offered at the Power Plant Mall. This is simply a must. So rush to fashionable Manila's favorite mall and set your shopping spirit free.

Investing in real estate

A SIX-TOPIC SERIES of lectures on Investing in Real Estate will be conducted by Urban Institute of Real Estate at 1:30 to 6 p.m. on Jan. 16, 17, 18, 19, 23, and 24 at the Maximo Function Room, Second Floor, Max's Restaurant, Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati City. Invited to attend thess seminars are real estate investors, developers, professionals and property owners.

This lecture series would initiate participants to the ABCs of real estate investing and avoid costly mistakes that were usually suffered by inexperienced investors, thus guiding them to a pleasant and successful real estate business. Numerous issues concerning prospective real estate investor, financiers and developers; owners and realty professionals would be discussed.

The topics can be attended separately and are all stand alone.

This Lecture Series is accredited by DTI for CEP compliance and will have as lecturer lawyer Dennis Tablizo, noted resource speaker on land laws; and engineer Enrico Cruz, who has more than 35 years in real estate, engineering, construction, management and education. Cruz is also a licensed real estate consultant and 1st and 8th placer in the real estate appraiser's and broker's board examinations respectively, and was invested as a "Real Estate Fellow" by the Philippine Council of Real Estate Educators.

For other details or advance registration, call Urban Institute at 681-0928 or 0916-4269174 or by e-mail at urbanet@pacific.net.ph.

January 6, 2006

TO ALL STOCKHOLDERS OF SALCON POWER CORPORATION:

Please be advised that KEPCO Philippines Corporation ("*Kephilco*"), KEPCO Philippines Holdings, Inc. ("*Kepco Holdings*"), Intrepid Holdings, Inc. ("*Intrepid*") and JAD Holdings, Inc. ("*Jad*") have filed a Tender Offer Report (SEC Form 19-1) with the Securities and Exchange Commission (The "*SEC*") and the Philippine Stock Exchange ("*PSE*") pursuant to Section 19 of the Securities Regulation Code in connection with the Buyers' intention to acquire common shares representing at least 43.81% but no more than 60% of the outstanding capital stock of Salcon Power Corporation (the "*Company*") (such intention to acquire the Shares, the "*Tender Offer*").

Kephilco, Kepco Holdings, Intrepid and Jad have obtained commitments from Salcon Holdings Philippines, Inc. ("*SHPI*") and ATC Engineering Sdn Bhd ("*ATC*") for the purchase by Kepco Holdings, Intrepid and Jad (collectively the "*Buyers*") of an aggregate of 654,995,108 common shares (approximately 73.02% of the Shares subject of the Tender Offer) from SHPI and ATC. The Buyers intend that the Intrepid and Jad (collectively, the "*IJ Group*") shall acquire any Shares that may be tendered by any stockholders other than SHPI and ATC in response to the Tender Offer.

The Tender Offer shall commence at 9:30 a.m. on January 6, 2006, and end at 3:00 p.m. on February 2, 2006 (the "*Tender Offer Period*"). The Shares to be tendered are intended to be crossed on the PSE on February 15, 2006 (the "*Cross Date*"). Should any of the business days during the period from January 6, 2006, the commencement of the Tender Offer Period, until February 15, 2006, the Cross Date, be declared a non-working holiday after the date hereof, the Tender Offer Period shall be extended and the Cross Date postponed, by such number of business days as is equivalent to the number of business days declared non-working holidays after the date hereof.

The purchase price for the acquisition of the Shares is P 1,614,596,656.00, or P1.80 per share, and will be payable in Philippine Pesos. Subject to the Terms of the Tender Offer attached as **Annex A** to the letter dated January 6, 2006 (the "*Offer Letter*") sent by the Buyers and Kephilco to the Company's stockholders of record as of December 23, 2005 (the date of the most recent list of stockholders available from the Stock Transfer Agent), all stockholders of the Company may tender all or a portion of their shares for acceptance and purchase by the Buyers within the Tender Offer Period.

The Buyers intend to pay for the tendered and accepted Shares on the Cross Date. Payments for the tendered and accepted Shares shall be made available by ATR-Kim Eng Securities, Inc. (the "*Paying Agent*") in the form of checks made payable to the tendering Stockholder for pick-up by the tendering Stockholders after 3:00 p.m. on the date falling three (3) business days after the Cross Date at the following address: 17th Floor, Tower One & Exchange Plaza, Ayala Triangle, Ayala Avenue, Makati City. Any payment not collected from the Paying Agent within thirty (30) calendar days from the payment date referred to above shall be dispatched, via registered mail, to the last recorded address of the tendering Stockholder at that Stockholder's risk.

Tendering Stockholders who hold stock certificates ("*Scrip Stockholders*") should submit, within the Tender Offer Period, their duly endorsed stock certificates and the duly accomplished Application to Tender Shares (the "*Application*") in the form attached as **Annex B** to the Offer Letter to ATR-Kim Eng Securities, Inc. (the "*Depository*") at 17th Floor, Tower One & Exchange Plaza, Ayala Triangle, Ayala Avenue, Makati City, together with the other documentary requirements specified in the Offer Letter.

For the convenience of Scrip Stockholders who are based in Cebu and Davao or elsewhere outside Luzon, shares of common stock in the Company may be tendered by submitting the requirements specified in the Offer Letter to the Cebu and Davao branches of the Depository no later than 3:00 p.m. on January 30, 2006:

Cebu Office:
ATR-Kim Eng Securities, Inc.
Room 206
Cebu Holdings Center, Cebu Business Park
Cebu City
Telephone No.: (032) 231 1324
Attention: Ms. Cheryl L. Go

Davao Office:
ATR-Kim Eng Securities, Inc.
No. 7 MT Aquino Building
J.P. Cabaguio Avenue
Davao City
Telephone No. (082) 224 2860
Attention: Mr. Miguel Luis R. Aquino

After 3:00 p.m. on January 30, 2006, Scrip Stockholders who are based outside Luzon may tender their shares of common stock in the Company only by submitting the foregoing requirements to the Depository's offices in Makati City.

The Depository reserves the right to require tendering Stockholders to present additional documents for purposes of determining the validity, eligibility and acceptability of the shares of common stock being tendered by those Stockholders.

The Depository will submit the share certificates for validation to Metrobank Trust Banking, the Company's stock transfer agent (the "*Stock Transfer Agent*") at 17th Flr., GT Tower International 6813 Ayala Ave., corner H.V. dela Costa St., Makati City. Defective Applications (*e.g.*, any Application with a discrepancy between the specimen signatures on file and the endorsement on the stock certificates) must be corrected within the Tender Offer Period to avoid being rejected by the Buyers. Consequently, Stockholders are strongly urged against tendering their shares at the last minute to allow all parties sufficient time within which to correct any deficiencies in the Application.

Stockholders are also urged to indicate their telephone numbers in their respective Applications to allow the Depository to inform them immediately of any deficiencies in their Applications.

Tendering Stockholders whose shares are lodged with the Philippine Central Depository Nominee Corporation (such Stockholders, "*Scripless Stockholders*") should instruct their brokers to electronically transfer their shares of common stock in the Company to ATR-Kim Eng Securities, Inc. (the "*Broker*") in accordance with the guidelines attached as Annex F to the Offer Letter for receipt by the Broker prior to 3:00 p.m. of February 2, 2006. The Broker shall thereafter act as custodian of the Shares until such time that sale and transfer of the Shares to the Buyers is completed or the tendered Shares are withdrawn in accordance with the Terms of the Tender Offer attached as Annex A to the Offer Letter.

Tendering Stockholders may withdraw any Shares tendered any time before the end of the Tender Offer Period. For a withdrawal to be effective, written notice of withdrawal must be received by the Depository (for Scrip Stockholders) or by the Broker (for Scripless Stockholders) no later than 3:00 p.m. of February 2, 2006. Withdrawn Shares shall be returned in the same form they were received to the withdrawing Stockholder's broker (for scripless Shares) or to the withdrawing Stockholder (for certificated Shares) within three (3) trading days from the end of the Tender Offer Period. Any and all costs and expenses incurred in connection with the return of the withdrawn Shares shall be borne by the Stockholder making the withdrawal.

Copies of the SEC Form 19-1 filed with the SEC and the tender offer application kit may be obtained by Stockholders from the Company and the Broker at their addresses indicated above, and from the Public Information and Assistance Center of the Philippine Stock Exchange at G/F, PSE Center, Exchange Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City. Copies of this letter, along with the Application and the attachments will be sent to the Company's stockholders of record as of December 23, 2005 (the date of the most recent available list from the Stock Transfer Agent) by registered mail.

Thank you and best regards.

KEPCO Philippines Corporation
KEPCO Philippines Holdings, Inc.
By:
Name: Lee, Gil-Gu

Intrepid Holdings, Inc.
JAD Holdings, Inc.
By:
Name: Dennis T. Villareal

(PDI--Jan. 6, 7 & 8, 2006)

PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY

PORT DISTRICT OFFICE OF VISAYAS
CIP COMPLEX, SERGING OSMEÑA BLVD., NORTH RECLAMATION AREA, CEBU CITY, PHILIPPINES
TEL. NO. (032) 232-3401 TO 04, FAX NO. (032) 232-1990
email: pdavisayas@ppavis.com website: www.ppavis.com

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY, Port District Office - Visayas**, through its Bids and Awards Committee - Engineering Project (BAC-EP), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

A:
Name of Contract : **Improvement of Guimbal Port**
Location : Guimbal, Iloilo
Brief Description : Construction RC Deck
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) : P16,773,366.85
Source of Funds : PPA Corporate Fund
Contract Duration : Two Hundred Thirty Five (**235**) Calendar Days
PCAB Registration : **MEDIUM A** "Ports, Harbor & Offshore Engineering"

Required Equipments :

1)	2 units	Bar Bender	Owned
2)	2 units	Bar Cutter	Owned
3)	2 units	One Bagger Concrete Mixer	Owned
4)	2 units	Concrete Vibrator	Owned
5)	1 unit	Boom Truck	Owned
6)	1 unit	Diesel Hammer	Owned/Leased
7)	1 unit	Drop Hammer	Owned/Leased
8)	1 unit	Truckmounted Crane	Owned/Leased
9)	1 unit	Welding Machine	Owned

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	January 20-26, 2006
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	Jan. 20 - Feb. 2, 2006
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	February 9, 2006

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office - Visayas, CIP Complex, Serging Osmeña Blvd., North Reclamation Area, Cebu City upon their submission of a LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of **P1,100.00** (inclusive of VAT) to the Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office - Visayas Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **P11,000.00** (inclusive of VAT) to the Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office - Visayas Cashier.

The Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office - Visayas assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

This publication voids the last publication of the Invitation for Eligibility and to Bid for the above project which had an estimated cost of P9,399,541.64 published on Dec. 29, 2005.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) **JAMES J. GANTALAO**
BAC Chairman

(PDI - Jan. 6 & 13, 2006)

PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY

PORT DISTRICT OFFICE OF VISAYAS
CIP COMPLEX, SERGING OSMEÑA BLVD., NORTH RECLAMATION AREA,
CEBU CITY, PHILIPPINES
TEL. NO. (032) 2323401-04, FAX NO. (032) 2321990
e-mail: pdavisayas@ppavis.com: website: www.ppavis.com

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY, Port District Office – Visayas**, through its Bids and Awards Committee – Engineering Project (BAC-EP), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

A:
Name of Contract : **Proposed RC Deck & Causeway, Extension**
Location : Port of Libertad, Antique
Brief Description : Construction RC Deck & Causeway
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) : P 9,056,483.89
Source of Funds : PPA Corporate Fund
Contract Duration : One Hundred Sixty Eight (**168**) Calendar Days
PCAB Registration : **Small B** "Ports, Harbor & Offshore Engineering"

Required Equipments :

1)	2 units	One Bagger Concrete Mixer	Owned
2)	2 units	Bar Cutter	Owned
3)	2 units	Concrete Vibrator	Owned
4)	1 unit	Backhoe	Owned/Leased
5)	1 unit	Bar Bender	Owned
6)	1 unit	Boom Truck	Owned
7)	1 unit	Diesel Hammer	Owned/Leased
8)	1 unit	Drop Hammer	Owned/Leased
9)	1 unit	Motor Grader	Owned/Leased
10)	1 unit	Dump Truck	Owned/Leased
11)	1 unit	Vibratory Road Roller	Owned/Leased
12)	1 unit	Truckmounted Crane	Owned/Leased
13)	1 unit	Rock Grapple	Owned/Leased
14)	1 unit	Welding Machine	Owned

B:
Name of Contract : **Proposed Widening of Passenger (Tourist) Access Lane**
Location : Port of Biri, Northern Samar
Brief Description : Construction of Causeway
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) : P 7,478,172.83
Source of Funds : PPA Corporate Fund
Contract Duration : One Hundred (**100**) Calendar Days
PCAB Registration **Small B** "Port & Offshore Engineering"

Required Equipments :

1)	2 units	One Bagger Concrete Mixer	Owned
2)	2 units	Concrete Vibrator	Owned
3)	1 unit	Welding Machine	Owned
4)	1 unit	Bar Cutter	Owned
5)	1 unit	Plate Compactor	Owned
6)	1 unit	Dump Truck	Owned/Leased

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bids Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

BAC Activities	*Schedule*
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	January 12-18, 2006
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	January 12-25, 2006
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	February 1, 2006

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office – Visayas, CIP Complex, Serging Osmeña Blvd., North Reclamation Area, Cebu City upon their submission of a LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of **P1,100.00** (inclusive of VAT) to the Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office – Visayas Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **P11,000.00** (inclusive of VAT) to the Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office – Visayas Cashier.

The Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office – Visayas assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) **JAMES J. GANTALAO**
BAC Chairman

(PDI – Dec. 29, 2005 & Jan. 6, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR AUTHORITY TO INSTALL, CONSTRUCT, AND MAINTAIN PROPOSED MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS FOR YEAR 2006 WITH PRAYER FOR PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY

ERC CASE NO. 2005-281 MC

VISAYAN ELECTRIC COMPANY, INCORPORATED (VECO),
Applicant.
x-----------------------------------x

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given of the filing by Visayan Electric Company, Incorporated (VECO), on October 3, 2005 of an application for authority to install, construct and maintain proposed major capital projects for the year 2006 with prayer for provisional authority pursuant to the provisions of Republic Act No. 9136 (Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001).

The Commission has set the application for hearing on January 20, 2006 at ten o'clock (10:00) in the morning at the ERC Cebu Field Office, Ground Floor, Machay Bldg., Gorordo St., Cebu City.

All interested parties who may wish to comment on or oppose the said application should file their comments and/or oppositions on or before the date of hearing. Such parties who may wish to have the details of the application and who shall have manifested to the Commission their desire and intention to participate actively in the proceedings, may request that before the date of hearing, they may be furnished with copies of the application by the applicant, which is hereby directed to furnish the parties making such request with copies of the application and its attachments. Likewise, any such party may examine the application and other pertinent records filed with the Commission during the usual office hours.

WITNESS, the Honorable **RODOLFO B. ALBANO, JR.**, Chairman, and the Honorable Commissioners **OLIVER B. BUTALID, JESUS N. ALCORDO, RAUF A. TAN** and **ALEZANDRO Z. BARIN**, this 11th day of November 2005 in Pasig City.

(Sgd.) **MARIA TERESA A. R. CASTAÑEDA**
Executive Director III

(PDI - Jan. 6, 2006)

This is to inform the public that **VALENTINO T. ELCANO** has been missing for almost 10 years now. Anyone who can give any information about his whereabouts is asked to get in touch with Erasto Elcano at 65 Imperial Street, Cubao, Quezon City.

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Surigao del Sur
Bislig City

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Republic of the Philippines, through the Department of Education, has received an Official Development Assistance (ODA) Loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) in the amount of P1,749 Million under Loan Agreement # PH-P200, towards the financing of the Secondary Education Development and Improvement Project (SEDIP) dated December 28, 1999. It is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments for the new construction of school buildings. In view hereof, the Government of the Philippines through the DepEd-SEDIP with the participation of the Local Government Unit (LGU) of the City of Bislig as implementor, hereinafter called the Agency, wishes to receive bids for the new construction of an SBP Package at Tabon M. Estrella NHS located at Barangay Tabon, Bislig City.

1) Two Storey Four (4) Classroom Building with Guidance Room and Toilets
2) Two Storey Science Laboratory with Industrial Arts Building

Disbursement of the ODA loan by JBIC will be subject, in all respects, to the terms and conditions of the Loan Agreement, including the disbursement procedures and the "Guidelines for Procurement under JBIC ODA Loans" No party other than the Department of Education shall derive any rights from the Loan Agreement or have any claims to loan proceeds. The above Loan Agreement will cover only part of the project cost. As for the remaining portion, the Agency will take appropriate measures for finance. JBIC requires that bidders and contractors, as well as DepEd-SEDIP under contract funded with JBIC ODA loans and other Japanese ODA, observe the highest standard of ethics during the procurement and execution of such contracts. In pursuance of this policy, JBIC:

1) Will reject a proposal for award if it determines that the bidder recommended for award has engaged in Corrupt or Fraudulent practices in competing for the contract in question;
2) Will recognize a contractor as ineligible, for a stated period of time, to be awarded a contract funded with JBIC ODA loans if it, at any time, determines that the contractor has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practices in competing for, or in executing, another contract financed by JBIC ODA loans or other Japanese ODA.

Bidding is open to all Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) – registered contractor or joint venture contractors, with PCAB License at least Medium B Classification on Building. Prospective Bidders/Contractors shall meet the minimum qualifying criteria of three (3) years construction experience. The schedule of activities for the above listed projects is indicated below:

• **Application and Issuance of Eligibility Forms** (Upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P200.00)	January 2, 2006 up to 5:00 PM of January 16, 2006 at the BAC Secretariat Office, CPDO, City Hall Bislig City
• **Submission of Letter of Intent and duly accomplished Application of Eligibility**	Up to 5:00 PM of January 20, 2006 at the BAC Secretariat Office, CPDO, City Hall Bislig City
• **Issuance of Bid Documents** (Upon payment of non-refundable fee of P 6,000.00)	January 18-27, 2006 up to 5:00 PM at the BAC Secretariat Office, CPDO, City Hall Bislig City
• **Pre-Bid Conference**	January 30, 2006, at the Conference Room of the City Engineering Office, City Hall Bislig City
• **Opening of Bids**	February 10, 2006 at the Conference Room of the City Engineering Office, City Hall Bislig City

All particulars relative to eligibility, bidding, evaluation of Bids, Award of Contract and enforcement hereof shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR-A) of RA 9184 otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act."

The BAC reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility, or all bids, declare a failure of bidding or not award the contract if among, others, there is evidence of collusion, including any act which restricts, suppresses or defeats competition, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.

The BAC also assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidder(s) for any expenses or loss that they may incur in the preparation of its bids, or any obligation to inform the affected bidder(s) on the ground(s) of BAC action, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) **REYDANDE D. AZUCENA**
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)
Bislig City, Surigao del Sur

(PDI – Dec. 30, 2005 & Jan. 6, 2006)

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION
PDIC Extension Office, SSS Building, V.A. Rufino St.
corner Ayala Avenue, Makati City
Telephone Number: 841-4925; Fax Number: 841-4927
Website: www.pdic.gov.ph Email: bacsecretariat@pdic.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) invites interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply, delivery and installation of any or all of the following IT hardware:

Procurement Project Code	Quantity	Hardware	Approved Budget in Philippine Pesos	Cost of Bid documents
A	114	Notebook Computers	PhP 13,680,000.00	PhP 1,400.00
B	13	File Servers	9,100,000.00	1,000.00
C	10	Network Switch	600,000.00	500.00
D	1	Back-up System	500,000.00	500.00
E	100	UPS	700,000.00	500.00
F	25	Network Laser Printers	1,705,000.00	500.00
G	6	Portable Laser Printer	270,000.00	500.00
H	2	Lime Printers (1200 lpm)	832,600.00	500.00
I	5	Line Printers (1000 lpm)	1,431,750.00	500.00
J	5	High Speed Impact Printers (500 lpm)	1,115,500.00	500.00
		TOTAL	PhP 29,934,850.00	PhP 6,400.00

The Instruction to Bidders and the Fact Sheets shall be made availabe to interested bidders starting January 3, 2006 at the BAC Secretariat, PDIC Extension Office, 9th Floor, SSS Building, Ayala Avenue corner V.A. Rufino St., Makati City after payment of a non-refundable amount as specified in the table above. Bidders who intend to bid for more than one procurement project shall pay the aggregate cost of bid documents for all procurement projects to be bid.

The pre-bid conference shall be held on January 13, 2006, 10:30 A.M. at PDIC Extension Office, Board Room, 8th Floor, SSS Building, Ayala Avenue corner V.A. Rufino St., Makati City.

Deadline for the submission and opening of the eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals shall be on or before 9:00 A.M., January 27, 2006 at the BAC Secretariat, 9th Floor, SSS Building, Ayala Avenue corner V.A. Rufino Street, Makati City.

The eligibility screening of bidders, evaluation of bids and awarding of contract shall be governed by Republic Act 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

PDIC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or any part thereof, to waive any informality or minor defect, and to accept the offer most advantageous to the Government.

PDIC shall in no case be held responsible or liable for any and all costs associated with the bidders' participation in the bidding process regardless of its results.

Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI--January 6, 2006)

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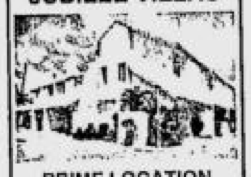

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■ **COMPUTER TECHNICIAN**
Male, not more than 30 years old. Must have a relevant experience with extensive hands-on knowledge on computer hardware, software troubleshooting, repair and maintenance (MONITORS, CPU, printers, scanners, modem etc.).

■ **TECHNICAL HEAD**
Male, not more than 30 years old, must have a degree in Computer Engineering, Electronics and Communications Engineering or computer related courses. Preferably with extreme knowledge in Information Technology & Solutions. Highly analytical, team leader & player.

■ **GRAPHIC ARTIST**
Male or Female, not more than 30 years old, candidate must possess at least a Bachelor's Degree in Art & Design, Advertising/Media or equivalent. Highly creative, resourceful and with experience in creating marketing materials such as Print Ads, POPs, posters, etc. At least 2 years working experience

■ **PRODUCT SPECIALIST**
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Tel #: 3763299 or 3763298 loc. 110
Fax #: 4153907

REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS
KAGAWARAN NG KATARUNGAN
PANGASIWAAN SA PATALAAN NG LUPAIN
(LAND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY)
East Avenue cor. NIA Road
Quezon City

AGENCY : LAND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY

Position : Attorney I
Salary Grade : 16
Place of Assignment : Central Office
Item Number : LRAB – ATY 1 – 7
No. of Vacancies : 1
Qualification Standards : Bachelor of Laws
Experience & Training : None Required

Position : Attorney II
Salary Grade : 18
Place of Assignment : Central Office
Item Number : LRAB – ATY 2 – 8
No. of Vacancies : 1
Qualification Standards : Bachelor of Laws
Experience & Training : None Required

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late FELICIDAD TABERNERO who died on October 2, 1985 was extrajudicially settled in accordance with the extrajudicial settlement with waiver of rights by the heirs duly executed before Notary Public Consul General Rolando Guzman of Winnipeg, Monitoba, Canada per doc WG-463 Series 536 O.R. No.888998; Consul Raul Hernandez, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada as per Doc 068; Page 116; Book 08; Series of 2005. (PDI-Jan. 6, 13 & 20, 2006)

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Marketing Managers 09178463228

RTW CONSIGN 0917-8830002

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National Power Corporation

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Republic of the Philippines

NPC- MMSD 2006-001

Fuel Hauling Services – Luzon Area/ Various Spare Parts and Lube Oils for NPC-SPUG

1. The NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION (NPC), through its approved Corporate Budget of CY 2005 intends to apply the sum of (Please see schedule under Item no. 9) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract listed below. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. NPC now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for GOODS listed below. Delivery of the GOODS is required by the date indicated in the bid documents. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act", and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from NPC and inspect the Bidding Documents at the Address given below from 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM from Monday to Friday. Issuance of Bidding Documents shall start on January 6, 2006 from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Monday to Friday. No Bid Documents shall be issued on the date of bidding.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount listed below. The method of payment will be cash. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. NPC will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on dates listed below at the designated NPC function rooms.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address as listed in the Bid Documents on or before the dates stated below. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form as stated in the Bid Documents. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be on the dates specified hereunder at the designated NPC function rooms. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
9. ITEMS FOR BID.

Schedule	Date/Time & Place of Bidding	Item Description	PR No. / Inquiry No.	ABC (In Pesos)	Bid Docs Price
I	January 31, 2006 10:00 A.M. Moriones Room	Hauling Services: for SPUG-Luzon Operations – Tablas DPP / Romblon DPP / PB109 / PB114	PB060131-MMMT4131 HO-LOD-05-213	10,286,550.00	P 3,300.00
II		Hauling Services: Masbate Pier to Sibuyan, Concepcion, Banton, Corcuera, San Jose & Ticao DPP	PB060104-MMMT3994(PB2) HO-LOD-05-190	4,965,080.00	P 1,100.00
III		Hauling Services: Manila Pier to Lubang DPP	PB060104-MMMT3995(PB2) HO-LOD-05-191	2,813,500.00	P 1,100.00
IV	January 31, 2006 2:00 P.M. Moriones Room	Air Compressor for Power Barge 119	SB051103-MMJP3768(LSB 2/NP/PB) HO-B19-05-085	790,000.00	P 550.00
V		High Pressure Hose, Jack Cylinder Cap, etc. for Power Barge 108	PB051004-MMAM3515(PB2) HO-PB8-05-045	945,608.00	P 550.00
VI		Spare Parts of 6DK32 Daihatsu Engines of Power Barge 108	PB050906-MMAM3350(PB2) HO-PB8-05-025	2,780,000.00	P 1,100.00
VII	February 3, 2006 10.00 A.M. Kañao Room	Spare Parts of 5x260 Kw Perkins Nos. 1, 3, 4, 5 & 6) of Cuyo DPP	PB060203-MMVB4138 SL-CUY-05-014	3,261,700.00	P 1,100.00
VIII		Spare Parts of 1 x 448 Kw CKD for Cuyo Diesel Plant	PB060203-MMVB4139 SL-CUY-05-025	2,565,200.00	P 1,100.00
IX	February 3, 2006 2:00 P.M. Kañao Room	Spare Parts of Dale-Perkins Balabac Diesel Power Plant	PB060203-MMVB4140 SL-BCD-05-016	1,056,000.00	P 550.00
X		Spare Parts of 2 x 54.4 Kw Onis Visa Gensets of Linapacan DPP	PB060203-MMVB4141 SL-LIN-05-006	585,000.00	P 550.00
XI		Spare Parts of Unit No. 1 (54 Kw Onis Visa Genset) for Agutaya Diesel Plant	PB060203-MMVB4142 SL-ADP-05-011	475,000.00	P 550.00

NOTE: A Pre-bidding Conference will be held for the following bidding schedules.

Schedule	Date	Time	Place
Schedule I – VI	January 17, 2006	2:00 P.M.	Kañao Room
Schedule VII – XV	January 20, 2006	2:00 P.M.	Pahiyas Room

10. NPC reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
THE BAC, MMSD – SECRETARIAT
Materials Management Department
Materials Management Services Division
Agham Rd. cor. Quezon Avenue
Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No. 921-6048, 921-3541 Loc. 5599 & 5477
mlriñanes@napocor.gov.ph
Fax No. 921-6048 • http://www.napocor.gov.ph

(Sgd.) LORENZO S. MARCELO
Chairman, BAC-MMSD

(PDI – January 6 & 13, 2006)

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DEATH NOTICE

NORBERTO "BERTING" MACALINO

Peacefully joined his Creator on January 5, 2006 at the age of 68.

He is survived by his loving wife PINING; children and children-in-law LOURDES & JUN, BETH-BETH & ED, DONG-DONG, DENG & ED, and JUNIOR & SHIELA.

His body lies in his residence at No. 127 Aquino St., Ignacio Compound, Sta. Quiteria, Caloocan City.

Interment will be on January 11, 2006, 10:00 a.m. at the Eternal Garden, Caloocan City.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...

INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:

1. Copy of Death Certificate;
2. Any identification document (I.D.)

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Manuel 'Nonoy' Buncio & Ruby Arroyo sadly announce the demise of the last patriarch of the Arroyo Buncio Clan of Bacolod City, Negros Occidental:

Señior DON MANUEL ARROYO BUNCIO

January 27, 1909 – January 2, 2006

son of the late **Señior Don Ildefonso Dy Buncio** (†) and
Sra. Doña Filomena Arroyo Buncio (†)
of Bacolod City.

His remains lie in state at Rolling Hills Memorial Chapel, Bacolod City. We request readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul. Interment to be announced later.

e-mail : nonoybuncio@yahoo.com
CP : 0919-5884599

EDITHA FLORES ALMERA

Now peacefully rests in the Grace & Goodness of our Lord on January 2, 2006 at the age of 62.

Her loving family, relatives and friends request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the La Funeraria Paz, Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City.

Interment will be on January 7, 2006 at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque after the celebration of the 9:00 AM Holy Mass.

RENATO HONTIVEROS SOLIDUM

of Ibajay, Aklan

Died in the Grace of Our Lord on January 03, 2006 at the age of 79.

His bereaved children **Ma. Theresa**, **Marilou** and **Robert**; son-in-law **Nabil**; daughter-in-law **Estee** and grandchildren **Karim**, **Thamer**, **Bijan** and **Rafael Hanz**, relatives and friends request prayers for the eternal repose of his soul. His sisters and brothers were **Consoladora S. Bofill** (†), **Araceli S. Legaspi** (†), **Teresita S. Bisnar** (†), **Expedito Solidum II** (†), **Ramie Solidum**.

His body lies in state at The San Roque Parish Mortuary, San Roque St., Mandaluyong City.

Interment will be on Saturday, January 7, 2006 at Himlayang Pilipino Tandang Sora, Quezon City after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

"Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

ANTONIO GONZALES DUMLAO

(Former Director, Bureau of Higher Education, State Counsel Department of Justice & Director Presidential Anti-Graft Commission)

Peacefully joined his Creator on January 4, 2006 at the age of 73.

His loving wife **Amelia A. Hernandez**; only son **Adolfo "Butch"**; daughter-in-law **Greta Agnar**; granddaughters **Mariel** and **Amelou**; brother **Freddie** and sisters **Nannie Felipe** and **Rose Dumlao**; uncles **Cecilio** and **Vicente**; cousins, nephews and nieces; relatives and in-laws request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Chapel A-1, La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on January 10, 2006 at th eHoly Cross Memorial Park, Novaliches, Quezon City immediately after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

CLASSIFIEDS

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Maynila, Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project/Brief Description	:	One job - Furnishing of materials, labor, tools equipment and supervision for the complete installation of one (1) unit new Water-Cooled Chiller at Security Plant Complex located at East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City, in accordance with BSP scope of work, Equipment Schedule, Drawings and Technical Specifications
Approved Budget for the Contract	:	P18,940,000.00
Contract Duration	:	Within two hundred twenty four (224) calendar days after receipt of the approved contract

Prospective bidders should have undertaken a similar project within the last five (5) years with an amount of at least 50% of the Approved Budget for the Contract. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	*Schedule*
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	4-17 January 2006
2. Pre-bid Conference	27 January 2006, 2:00 PM
3. Opening of Bids	14 February 2006, 2:00 PM
4. Bid Evaluation	} These shall be in accordance with the prescribed
5. Post-qualification	} periods allowed in the Implementing Rules &
6. Notice of Award	} Regulations (IRR)-A of R.A. No. 9184 dated } 10 January 2003

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P8,500.00 to the BSP Cashier.

The BSP assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.
Chairman

(PDI - Jan. 6, 2006)

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

06-1SG-004
Janitorial and Housekeeping Services for the Main and R.V. Mitra Building for CY 2006
House of Representatives, Quezon City

Standard Form Number: SF-GOOD-05
Revised on: July 28, 2004

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The House of Representatives, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	Janitorial and Housekeeping Services for the Main and R. V. Mitra Building for CY2006
Location	House of Representatives, Consitution Hills, Quezon City
Brief Description	*Provision of Janitorial and Housekeeping Services for various Congressmen's offices and various Secretariat offices located at the Main Building and R.V. Mitra Building*
Approved Budget for the Contract	P6,050,198.00
Delivery Period	*As specified in the contract*

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last 2 years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding, and have key personnel and equipment (owned, leased or under purchase) available for the prosecution of the project. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations-A.

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	Jan. 6 - Jan. 17, 2006
2. Pre-bid Conference	January 23, 2006
3. Submission of Eligibility Requirements; Technical and Financial Proposals/Opening of Eligibility, Technical and Financial Envelopes	February 9, 2006
4. Bid Evaluation	February 9, 2006
5. Post-qualification	February 16, 2006
6. Notice of Award	March 9, 2006

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Three Thousand Pesos Only (P3,000.00) to the House of Representatives Cashier before 3:00 P.M. (Monday to Thursday only).

The complete set of Eligibility Requirements and Bid Documents may be obtained at the (Bids and Awards Committee-Secretariat) Office of the Procurement and Supply Management Service, South Wing Extension, c/o Mr. Dominador M. Gamboa, BAC-Secretariat Head (Tel. Nos. 931-5663 & 931-5001 loc. 7523 & 7398). Eligibility documents, technical and financial proposals shall be placed in separate and marked sealed envelopes addressed to Atty. Leonardo B. Palicte III, Bids and Awards Committee Chairman, c/o the BAC-Secretariat and dropped in the bid box located at the Conference Room, Deputy Secretary General for Internal Audit, South Wing Basement, House of Representatives, National Government Center, Constitution Hills, Quezon City. **Deadline of submission and receipt of sealed bids shall be on Thursday, February 9, 2006 at 2:00 P.M.**

The House of Representatives assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) ATTY. LEONARDO B. PALICTE III
Bids and Awards Committee Chairman

(PDI – January 6 & 13, 2006)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Quezon City

ANNOUNCEMENT OF BIDDING

In consonance with R.A. 8976 otherwise known as the Philippine Food Fortification Act of 2000, the National Food Authority (NFA) as the implementing agency on iron fortified rice, wishes to announce that it will be conducting a bidding on January 24, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. at the NFA Boardroom, 10th Floor, Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City among all interested suppliers for the supply of THREE HUNDRED METRIC TONS (300 MT), MAXIMUM IRON COATED RICE PREMIX with an approved budget of Php 69.6 M, packed in twenty five (25) kg capacity multi-wall paper bag or its equivalent. Detailed product specifications and packaging shall be included in the Terms of Reference (TOR). Delivery period at designated NFA Manila warehouse/s shall be one hundred twenty days (120) upon the receipt of the Notice of Proceed.

All interested suppliers are required to submit price offers in Philippine Currency, (inclusive of all taxes) as specified in the NFA Bid Form.

All bidders are required to post a bid bond equivalent to 3% of the approved budget of Php 69.6 in the form of Cash, Cashier's and/or Manager's Check or an irrevocable L/C issued by a reputable bank in Metro Manila.

List of Eligibility Requirements and Instruction to Bidders may be secured thru MR. TOMAS R. ESCAREZ, Assistant Department Manager and MR. NESTOR U. PUANGCO, Division Manager, Department for Marketing Operations, 5th Flr., NFA Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City, Telephone Nos. 712-1564, 743-8696 or 712-3341 Loc. 8513 starting January 02, 2006.

The Terms of Reference (TOR) and Bid Documents will likewise be available starting January 02, 2006 up to January 10, 2006 (8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.) upon payment of a Php 15,000.00 non-refundable fee.

The **Pre-Bidding** conference will be held on **January 10, 2006**, at 10:00 a.m. at the NFA Boardroom, 10th Floor, Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City.

Submission of eligibility requirements, technical proposal and price offers will be between 8:00 a.m. to 9:55 a.m. at the NFA Boardroom, 10th Floor, Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City on **January 24, 2006. Opening of bids** will start at exactly **10:00 a.m.**

The National Food Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals, to waive any required or defect therein and accept the bid/s which is deemed most advantageous to the Agency.

(Sgd.) **JESSUP P. NAVARRO**
Deputy Administrator and
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - Dec. 30, 2005 & Jan 6, 2006)

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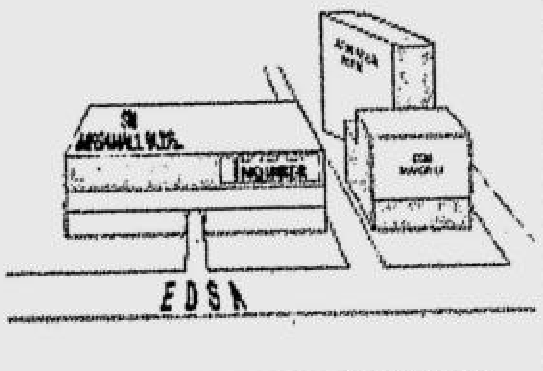

MANDALUYONG BRANCH
SM MEGAMALL 5TH LEVEL BLDG B, EDSA
TEL. NO.: 635-0219 / 637-2008
Contact Persons: Joy, Arnold, Randy & Arnel

NOTICE

This is to inform the public that **Esperanza S. Mariano**, Sales Operations Assistant, Laoag District Office, **Loyola Plans Consolidated, Inc.** has retired from her services since April 5, 2005. Two (2) official receipts of the company under her custody (Nos. C-001198927 and C-001198828) are unaccounted. All Claims arising out of this issue of said OR's are to be paid / settled by Esperanza S. Mariano in form of said documents.

(PDI–Dec. 24, 30, 2005; & Jan. 6, 2006)

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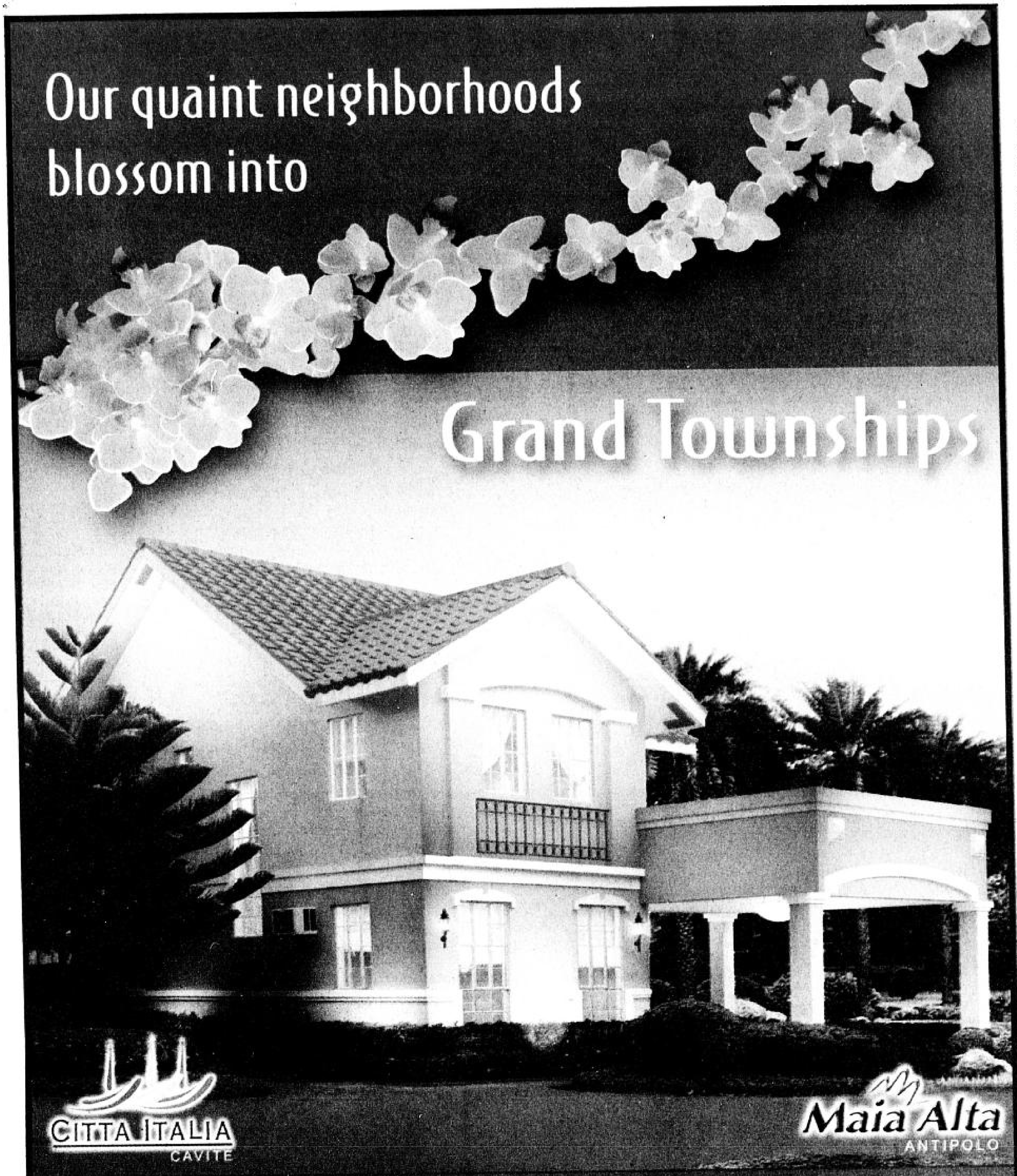
NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Notice is given that at the meeting of the Board of Directors of **MZ LAUNDRY VENTURES, INC.** it was **RESOLVED** that the corporation be dissolved and its affairs wound up, and for that purpose a special meeting of the stockholders will be held on the 15th day of January 2006 at 1:00 p.m. at 41 Carreon Village, San Bartolome, Novaliches, Q.C., Philippines to take action on the resolution.

(PDI - Dec 30, 2005, Jan 6 & 13, 2006)



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To learn more about our condominium project, Presidio, call **7183400** and **7183402**.

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A home in Citta Italia sets you apart from the rest, a step up to living in luxury. The distinctive Italian atmosphere is perfectly matched by first class amenities which include a clubhouse, swimming pool, tennis and basketball courts, parks & playgrounds, as well as community essentials such as a school, church and strip mall.

The community is designed to provide the residents with the relaxing lifestyle that they deserve. Every Citta Italia home is planned and laid out with a discerning eye for quality and details, designed specifically as a comfortable haven for quality living. A stroll around Citta Italia's exquisitely landscaped parks and playgrounds or dips in its beautiful swimming pool are just some of the rewards of living in a meticulously orchestrated community.

Drop by Citta Italia and discover one of Crown Asia's premier communities, a sanctuary for those who seek the best of Italian living.

MAIA ALTA: A Sold Out Success East of Metro Manila

Just a 45-minute drive from Makati or a 30-minute trip from Ortigas Center is Maia Alta, one of Crown Asia's many success stories. This hillside community, modeled after mountain villages in Italy, combines rustic charm with quick and easy access to the city. Maia Alta is just a few minutes away from top educational facilities in the country such as the U.P., Ateneo, Miriam College, and UA & P. Antipolo is also home to branches of the La Salle and Assumption schools. Popular malls such as Sta. Lucia, Robinson's and Shopwise are a short ride from the village. Maia Alta is home to golf lovers as it is surrounded by top golf courses in Antipolo -- The Valley Golf and Country Club, East Ridge and Forest Hills.

But there's more to Maia Alta than its proximity to schools and commercial areas. Homeowners are rewarded with scenic drives to and from the verdant hills of Antipolo, with spectacular views of the city. Maia Alta homes are specifically designed to make full use of the mountain environment; homes feature a lanai for better ventilation and light, more family areas and more efficient use of space, all wrapped up in classic Italian design and architecture. Amenities include a clubhouse with swimming pool, basketball and tennis courts, parks and playgrounds.

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Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

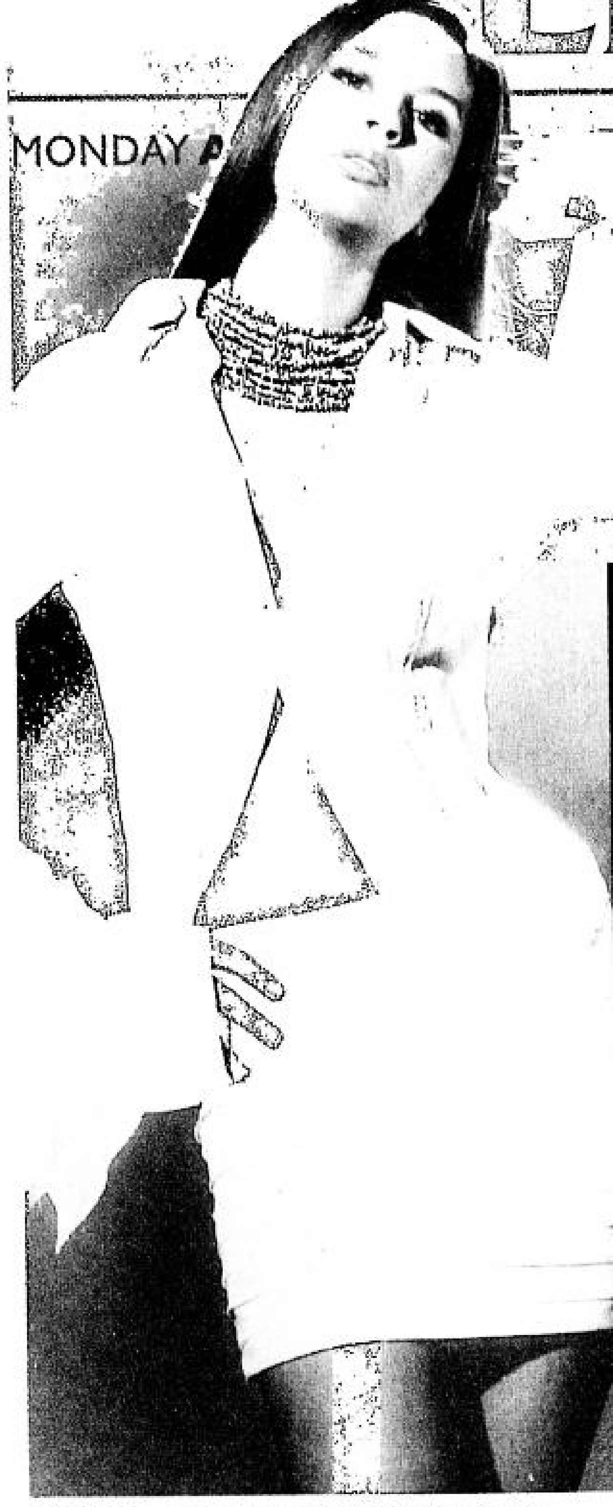
Kapal ng orig,
tibay ng orig!

Islander

Romance is in the air

YOUNG olive-green tube dress with pink floral lace and ruffle accents

CLOTHES:
EFREN OCAMPO
AT SM BOUTIQUE SQUARE
HAIR AND MAKEUP:
MARION SUAREZ
SHOES:
FIGLIA
ACCESSORIES:
ARNEL PAPA



WHITE bias cuff-sleeved top and white pleated chiffon skirt

OLIVE-GREEN long-sleeved top with ruffle accents over denims

LONG known for his elegant evening clothes, SM Boutique Square designer Efren Ocampo sees romanticism as the next big thing in fashion.

"Lace will be hot," he says, adding that he sees Victorian touches in his clothes for the coming year.

Ocampo's clothes are so soft they almost float. He uses chiffon in exquisite draped dresses for evening and ruffled tops for daywear. Other dainty details like pleats and tucks complement the luxury of lace.

While ivory and cream are in the news, Ocampo picks a palette of dusty pink and young olive green to update the look.

The new romantic fashion can be worn in either dressed up or dressed down mode.

"You can wear the top with a matching chiffon skirt for a formal event, with a pencil skirt to update the corporate look, or with jeans for casual wear," says Ocampo. "Suddenly, it's hip to be romantic."

The Efren Ocampo collection is available at the Boutique Square department of all SM stores.

DUSTY-PINK strappy pleated gown in iridescent and chiffon materials

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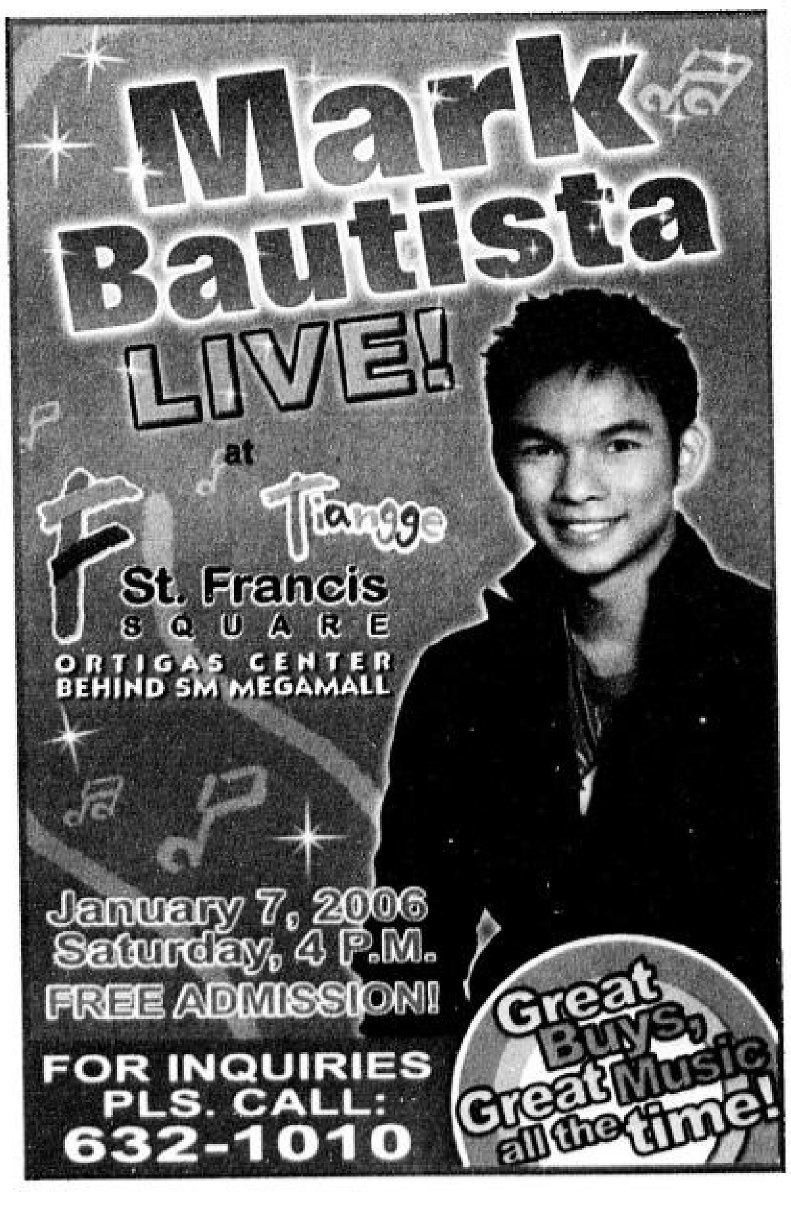
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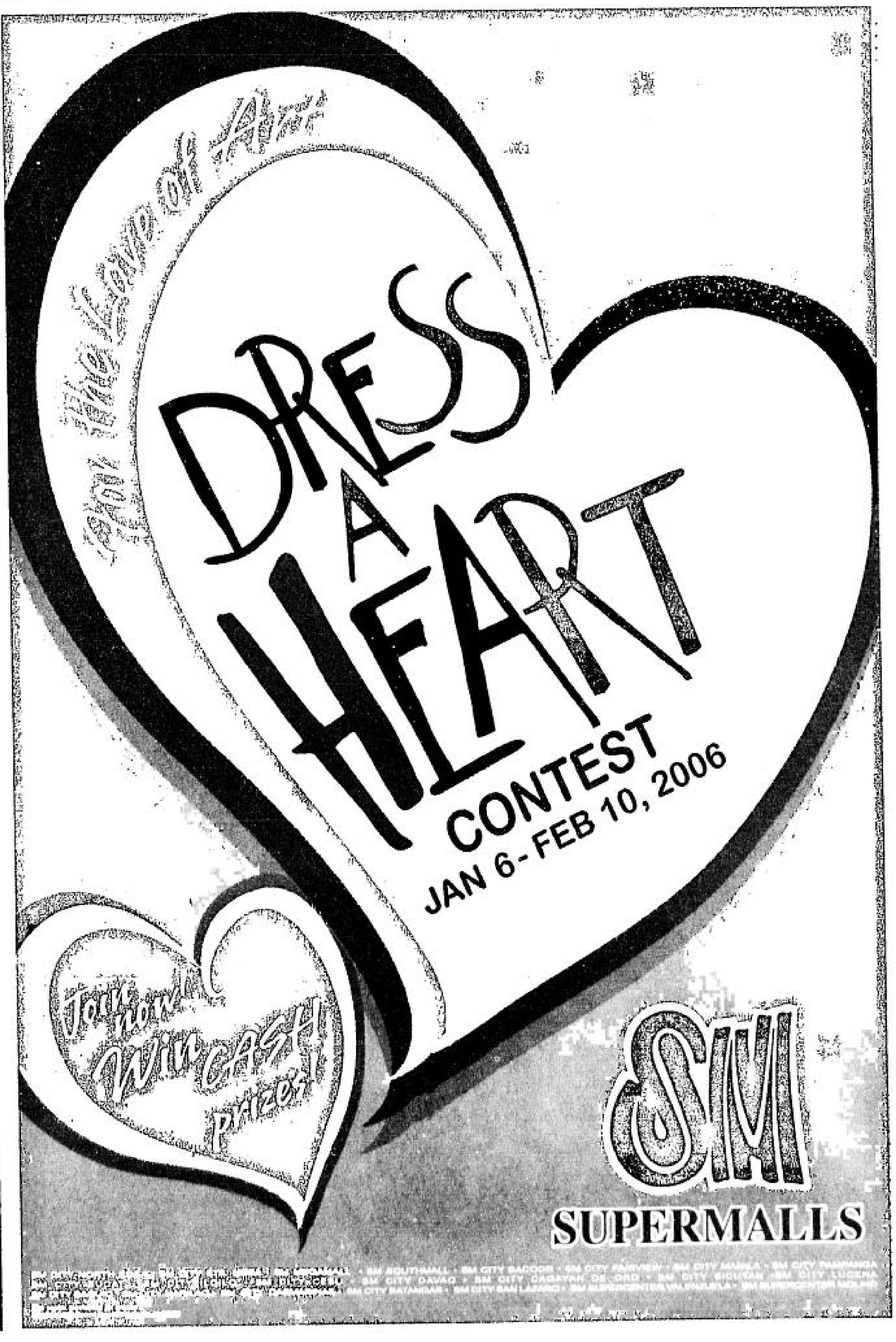
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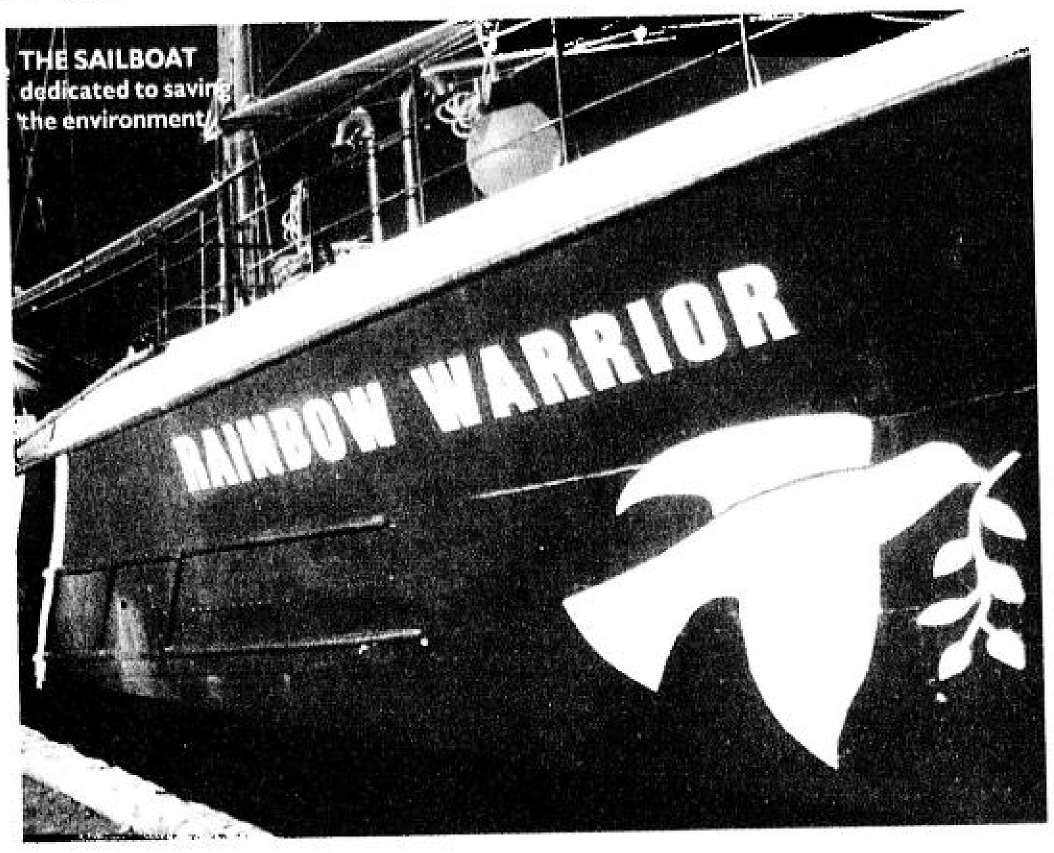

THE SAILBOAT dedicated to saving the environment

TATLER'S Anton San Diego, Manille's Greenpeace working woman, Hong Kong-based Patricia Liang, and Pepper Teehankee

CONCERNED couple. Carla Reyes T. and husband Al Tengco

GREENPEACE
RED Contantino, representative of Greenpeace Southeast Asia, and die-hard volunteer Mark Dia

PERTY Montinola, Greenpeace's Sven Teske and Jarlath Lynch

MANNY del Rosario and *moi* watch the awesome works of Greenpeace volunteers on video.

Hobnobbing with the green crusaders

ALA Paredes and Nino Avenido drink to an environmentally healthy world.

SOUTHERN gal Athena Ronquillo and young Argentinian captain of the Rainbow Warrior Danielle Rizzotti

BEAUTIFUL couple Jason and Virginia Lane and Madame Ambassador Delia Albert

SHANGRI-LA'S Tom Zita, Ambassador Mario Schuff and HSBC's Warner Manning

VON Hernandez; architect Anton Mendoza, organizer of the get-together; Greenpeace volunteer Michael Kessler of Germany; and South American Derek Au

THAT FAB CRUSADER FOR THE environment, the world-renowned Greenpeace, has embarked on another historic sea tour of Asia and the Pacific this year, *palanggas*, to deliver the message on the urgency of the global warming climate crisis. The group says solutions are available, but they are not being applied.

Climate change is today considered the greatest environmental threat facing the planet. It is caused primarily by the burning of fossil fuels such as coal and oil, *palanggas*, resulting in global warming.

Well, climate change can be stopped only if we begin the massive shift away from fossil fuels and toward renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power, which several concerned countries are already using, and believe me, *palanggas*, it is a shift that must begin not tomorrow, but today!

The flagship and most famous campaign vessel of Greenpeace——the Rainbow Warrior—sailed to our shores to bring the urgent message and to urge governments in the region to take action against pollution that causes climate change.

This was Rainbow Warriors' third trip here, in what was called "the Asia-Pacific Energy Revolution Tour," which began in Australia, then sailed to Hong Kong, the Philippines and Thailand.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

World-class architect and interior designer **Antonio Mendoza** hosted a small, intimate gathering so that we could join Greenpeace on board the Rainbow Warrior for us to learn more about the work of environmental group and the effects of climate change now and in the future.

Setting foot on board were the early birds, Shangri-La Hotel's popular GM **Jarlath Lynch** and communication officer **Joy Wassmer**. They were followed by super concerned individuals like **Manny del Rosario**; **Liana Romulo** and brilliant young business whiz, **Perty Montinola**; **Carla** and **Al Tengco**; **Pepper Teehankee** and Tatler's **Anton San Diego**.

The Greenpeace campaigners welcomed us. Cool, brilliant southern gal **Athena Ronquillo**, gave us a tour of the ship, together with **Mark Dia**, **Sven Teske**, **Michael Kessler**—all from Greenpeace International—and **Von Hernandez** and **Red Constantino**, representing Greenpeace-Southeast Asia.

Aprés the super interesting tour, the simple but superb buffet was served, catered by Cibo. After the yummy dinner, Argentinean Captain **Danielle Rizzotti** welcomed us and introduced us to good-looking **Derek Au**, the web designer for the tour.

Derek explained to us the history of Greenpeace and their tireless efforts worldwide, while a video showed us the events, actions and endless awesome campaigns which had shaped the "never-say-die" Greenpeace efforts, *palanggas*.

Red Constantino then spoke of the horrifying effects climate change might wrought in the Philippines and possible solutions to the crisis. During the open forum, Red C. answered several questions. His answers could be summed up by his call to action, "All of us, and you as individuals, can definitely help, by being heard. We only have one home, and it's the world we live in."

At 10:30 p.m., the Rainbow Warrior sailed off for Iloilo to continue its heart-warming crusade, all for the sake of our earth.

Think about it, *palanggas*. Better yet, let's all do something about it, *n'est ce pas*? (as in *di bala*?)

Goulbourn show-stopper

A rousing standing ovation for 10 awesome minutes was given to the brilliant mother-and-daughter team of **Jean Lim Goulbourn** and **Katrina Goulbourn Feist**, when they took their much-deserved bow at the elbow-to-elbow Ayala Museum during their "Tapestry" show, dahlings.

As opener, poetry was read by **Patxito Elizalde**, while **Audie Gemora** introduced each segment of the show with poetry written by talented **Luna Inocian**. Exotic dances by **James LaForteza** interspersed the segments. Needless to say, *palanggas*, Silk Cocoon's fantastic hand-woven fabric was the main ingredient that created the fabulous outfits which were complemented by stunning jewelry from Jewelmer, **Arnel Papa** and **Tina Treichler**.

A delightful super surprise for the chi-chi set was the segment that featured non-models: **Celine Lopez**, **Hindy Tantoco**, **Angelique Villaraza**, Pepper Teehankee, **Tina Tinio**, **Xeng Zulueta**, **DJ Montano**, **JR Isaac**, **Jenni Epperson**, **Jacques Dupasquier** and *moi*. It was my third time on the ramp last year.

The appreciative audience was a good mix—from bankers to businessmen, artists, diplomats, architects, interior designers, yuppies and philanthropists.

The Museum Plaza was bustling and gorgeous, with colorful floral arrangements, cool scented candles from Rustan's Essenses, canapes and desserts from Bizu, complimentary wine from Hardy's, and coffee and ice cream from San Miguel.

Topping the whole chic ambiance was the smooth sounds of sax player **Vince Lahorra**.

But most importantly, *palanggas*, it was a fabulous charity event: there were several pledges made for the benefit of "Gawad Kalinga." The Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corp., in fact, takes an active role in the program by running a a micro-finance project.

BRAZILIAN volunteer Francisco

TRES charmant French Ambassador Louis Heussaff, Katrina Goulbourn Feist and mother Jean Lim Goulbourn, and business tycoon Gerry Ablaza

HEY, we are models now! Silk Cocoon's brilliant designers Katrina Goulbourn Feist (left), and Jean Lim Goulbourn (second from right) with their "models" for the evening

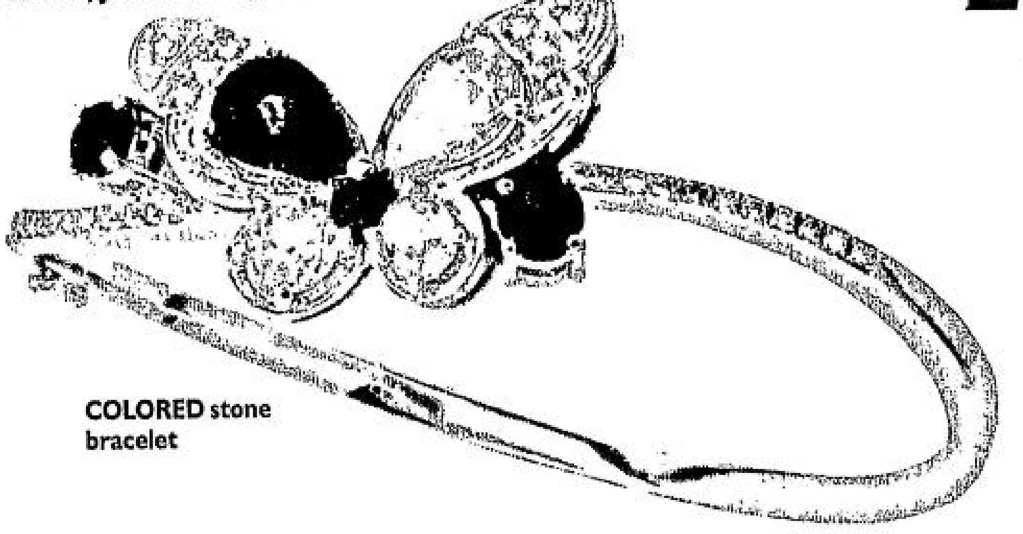
Monaco honorary consul Fortune Ledesma

ALL in the *famille*. Popular ambassador's wives Sylvia Schuff of Argentina, Jill Beckingham of UK and Jo-Lynne Sutherland of Canada

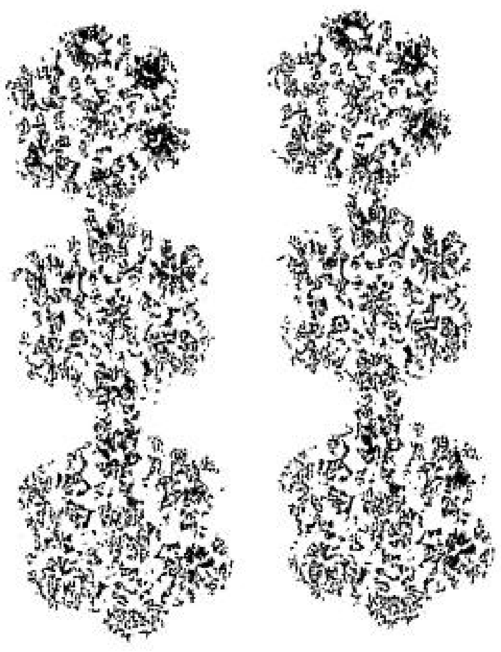
DANCE empress Becky Garcia

FRANCES Lim with Belgium Ambassador Gregoire Vadarkis and wife Martine V.

World-class jewellery



COLORED stone bracelet



FLORAL drop earrings

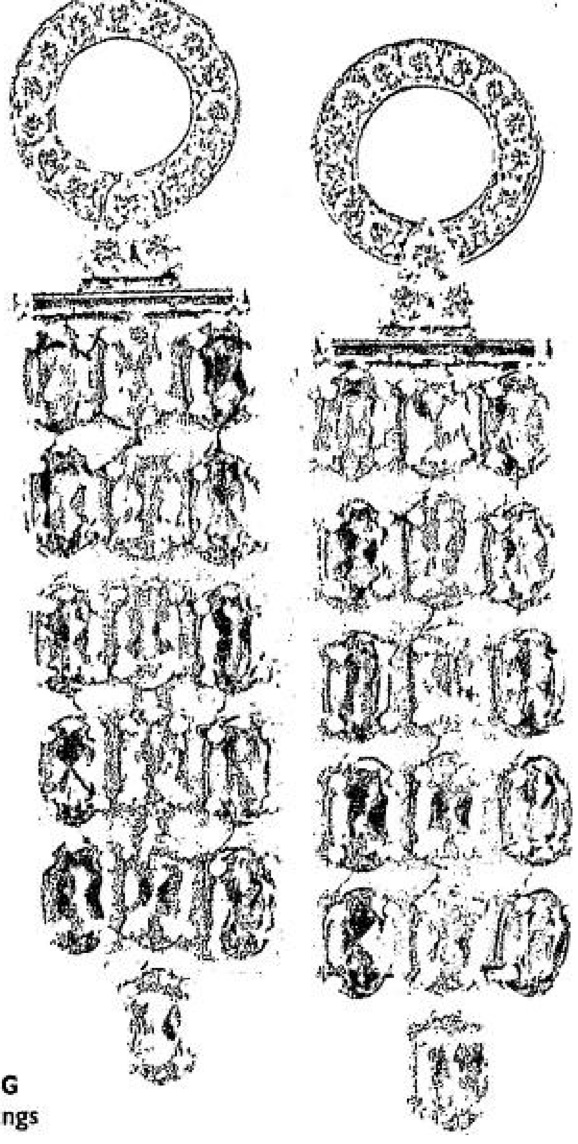
RAFAEL JEWELLERY, ONE OF THE Philippines' renowned jewelers, has come a long way from its humble beginnings in 1958. The Florencio family's longstanding tradition of creating intricate jewellery design and manufacture has gained them the respect of fellow jewelers in and out of the country.

In 2000, Rafael Jewellery was chosen by De Beers as one of four Philippine Jewellers to manufacture pieces for the Philippine Centennial. Headed by GIA Certified Gemologist Rafael Florencio, what began as a single point of sale at the Rafael Jewellery in Shangri-La Plaza Mall soon grew to encompass a network of 10 retail stores in Manila's major shopping districts.

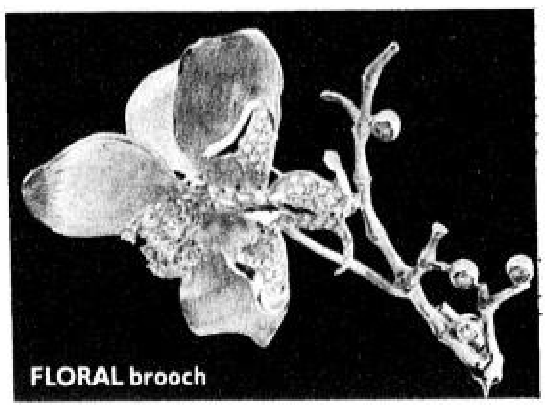
Rafael Jewellery's diamond suppliers are among the limited 100-120 sight holders accredited each year. Sight holders are suppliers that purchase rough diamonds directly from De Beers and cut and polish the diamonds themselves.

Rafael Jewellery prides itself on producing collections that are locally designed and manufactured. The collections offer a variety of delicate earrings, pendants, necklaces, bracelets and rings, and the ingenious use of colored stones.

Rafael Jewellery is located at 2/L Shangri-La Plaza Mall (6363399) and at the mezzanine level Makati Shangri-La Hotel (8138501).

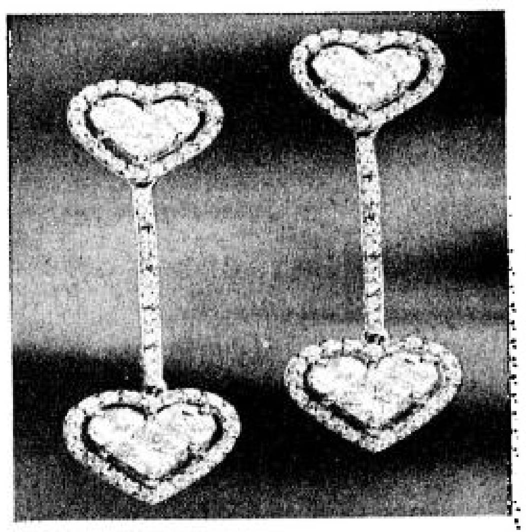


LONG earrings



FLORAL brooch

RING



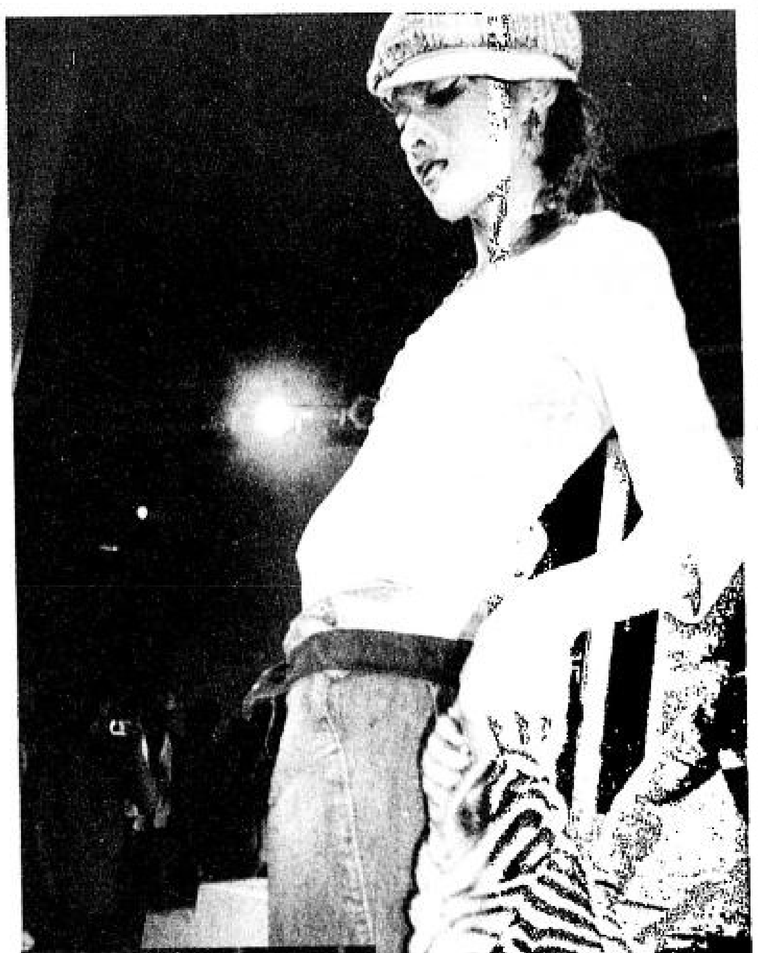
DROP earrings

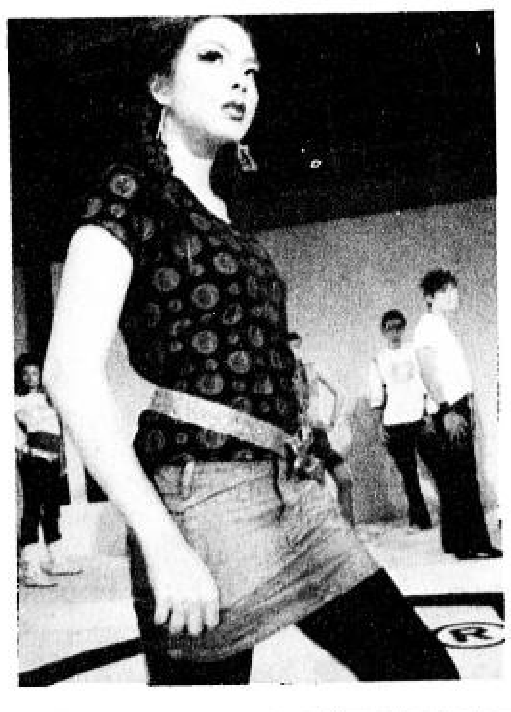
Engineered for hipness

LEVI'S ENGINEERED JEANS COLLECTION was recently unveiled at the Volvo showroom on Pasong Tamo by Levi's country manager Monch Martelino and Levi's brand leader Ronnie Celestial.

The fashion show presented a cross between the "mod" look of the '60s and the "punk" look of the late '70s and early '80s, to modern hip-hop and electronica beats. Most prominent in the collection was the "running leg" logo signature of the Engineered Jeans collection, which is imprinted on buttons, belt loop rivets and front pocket zippers. Panels of stretch fabric let movement flow easier and more comfortably.

Women and men can choose from three finishes for the jeans: the "pure worn" aged look, "mercury worn" (aged but slightly darker) or the "pure-worn lazer."





BE FREE to move in Levi's Engineered Jeans.

Raffle for Audi car on Jan. 15

SHOPPERS HAVE UNTIL JAN. 15 to win a brand-new Audi A4 worth P2.6 million in Power Plant Mall's Christmas Promo.

A minimum single purchase of P2,000 at any Power Plant Mall establishment entitles a shopper to one raffle stub. Rustan's Supermarket shoppers need a minimum single purchase of P3,000 to get one raffle stub. The raffle is a joint project of the mall and PGA Cars. Call 8981702.

LECTURE. Feng Shui writer Lillian Too will give a lecture 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Jan. 15, at the Westin Philippine Plaza, Harbor Garden Tent, Pasay City. Tickets are available at the World of Feng Shui Boutique, G/F, the Podium Mall, 18 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong City. Call 9147888, 9106352, 9160000, 0920-9509390, 0928-4050834 or 0917-9422842.

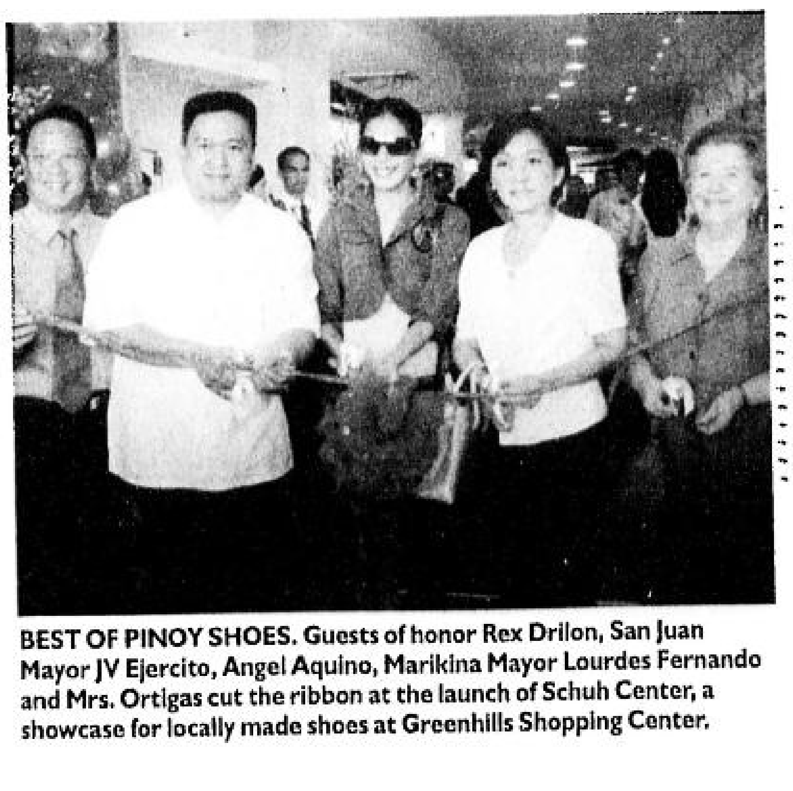
VOICE DEVELOPMENT COURSE. The Philippine Music Training School (PMTS) will accept enrollees for Voice Development Course (level 1) starting Jan. 11. Classes will begin Jan. 21. PMTS is at 117-A, S. Macaya St. Brgy. Pasong Tamo, Tandang Sora, QC. Call 4540078.

SEMINAR. The Federation of Philippine Photographers Foundation (FPPF) will conduct a practical digital photography seminar Jan. 14 at FPPF Office, Comfoods Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat cor. Chino Roces Avenues, Makati. Call 8137420 or 8435341.

AUTISM WEEK. The Autism Society Philippines (ASP) marks the 10th National Autism Consciousness Week with the theme "Taas Noo...Angat Autismo." Activities include a dinner show featuring individuals with autism, 6-10 p.m., Jan. 20, The Legend Villas, 60 Pioneer St., Mandaluyong City. Ticket is at P800. Only 150 seats available. A family support group meeting will be held 1:30-5 p.m., Jan. 21, at the Autism Society Philippines Office, Room 307 ML Building, Kamias Road, 1102 QC. Carmelita C. Almendrala, who has a masters degree in Special Education and a 37-year-old high-functioning autistic son, will facilitate. Registration is free but only 15 slots are available. Call 9266941/4368713, or e-mail info@autismphils.org or autismphils@pacific.net.ph.

CONFERENCE. Dr. Rita Dunn, educator and developer of the Dunn and Dunn Learning Styles model, is among 15 experts from the International Learning Styles Network of St. Johns University who will participate in the First International Learning Styles Leadership Conference, "Festival of Minds," Jan. 16-21, at the Baguio Country Club, Baguio City. Call (074)4428877/78 or (074)4469866.

WORKSHOP. The final run of Tapping the Creative Universe Workshop will be held 7-9 p.m., Jan. 26-28 and 30, and Feb. 1 and 3 at 31 M. Jocson St., Loyola Heights, QC. Workshop fee is P5,000. Call 9290230 or 4265375.



BEST OF PINOY SHOES. Guests of honor Rex Drilon, San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, Angel Aquino, Marikina Mayor Lourdes Fernando and Mrs. Ortigas cut the ribbon at the launch of Schuh Center, a showcase for locally made shoes at Greenhills Shopping Center.

Take me out to the carnival

KRIS Aquino in front of the Ranger

KRIS Aquino and James Yap in front of the Carousel

THE WORLD'S MOST-BELOVED traveling carnival is coming to the Philippines for the first time.

Fresh from its tours of Europe and the United States, the EuroStar Carnival comes to Manila for a limited time only in a huge 3-ha area at The Fort, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig.

Grand opening will be at 7 p.m. tomorrow, Jan. 7. A spectacular show will mark the launch, including French Cancan dancers, circus acts, a band and a fireworks display.

EuroStar Carnival promises a very European flavor, from the gate entrance to the interior setting and decoration, music and special effects.

EuroStar Carnival, a spectacular touring carnival famous for its large thrill rides, like the Giant Wheel, Booster, G-Force, Flipper, Flume Water Ride and Ranger, and family and kiddie rides such as The Nostalgic Horse Carousel, Bumper Car, Mini Pirate and Kiddie Swing.

There will also be game booths offering plenty of attractive plush toy prizes, food courts serving a wide range of carnival snacks, and a merchandise zone selling souvenirs and collectibles.

The EuroStar Carnival, brought in by Media Source Entertainment, Inc., will be managed by a team of Europeans who have years of experience in organizing and operating carnivals in Europe and USA. One group of Europeans operate the rides machinery and another group of Europeans will operate the games stalls, frequently giving away large plush toys. A team of trained local staff will undertake the day-to-day operation, all drilled by the management company and work to high standard of servicing.

The EuroStar Carnival is located at The Fort, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, and is open on Mondays to Thursdays, from 5 p.m. to 12 midnight; Fridays, from 5 p.m. to 2 a.m.; Saturdays, from 2 p.m. to 2 a.m.; and Sundays and holidays, from 2 p.m. to 12 midnight. For ticket inquiries, reservations and group sales, call 7274084 or 7274085.

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LIFESTYLE

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Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

FASHION

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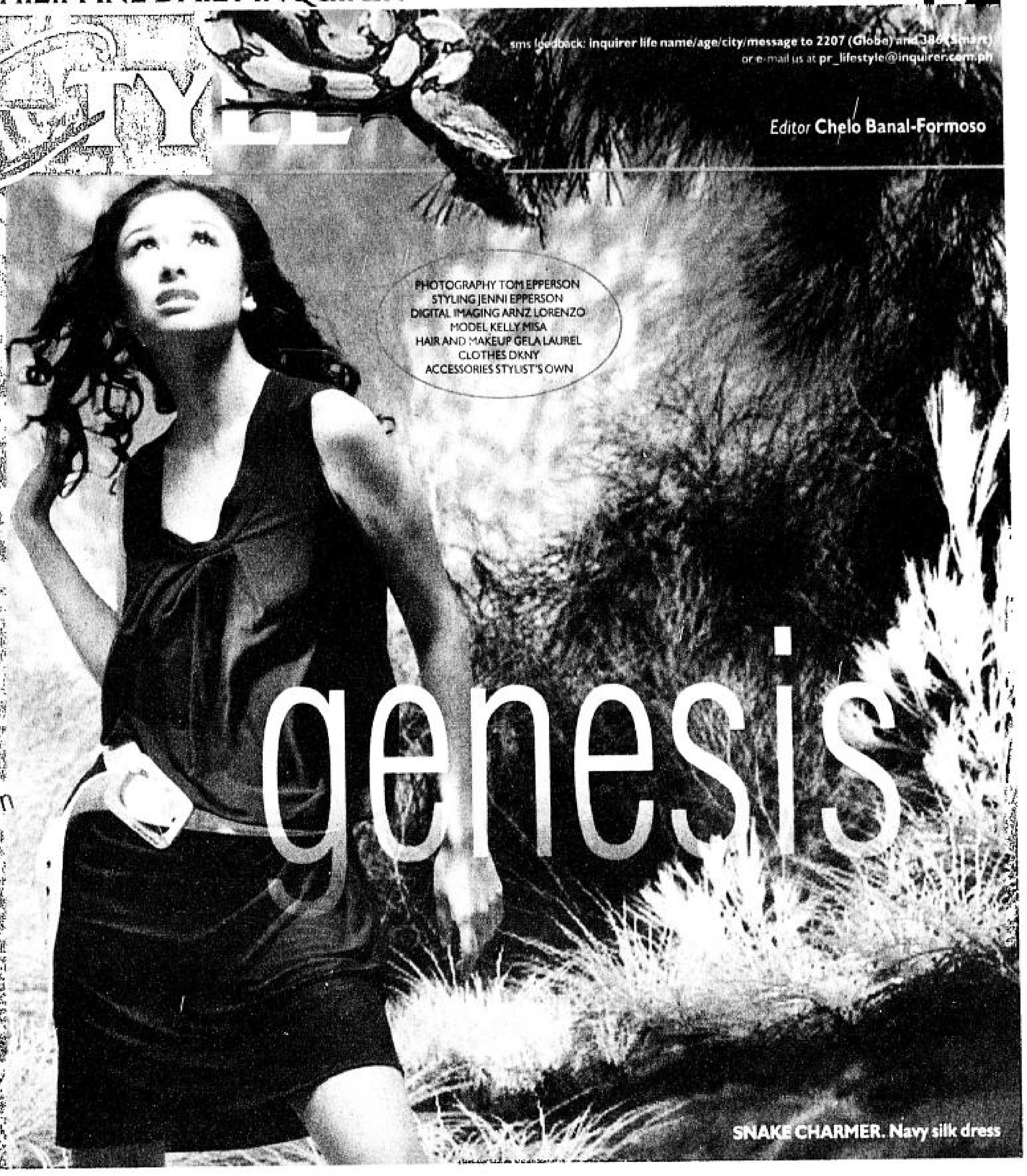
brewing your fashion sense
with tips from style setters
p. D3

START
your wild rumpus with DKNY
Spring/Summer 2006 collection
p. D1



genesis

PHOTOGRAPHY TOM EPPERSON
STYLING JENNI EPPERSON
DIGITAL IMAGING ARNZ LORENZO
MODEL KELLY MISA
HAIR AND MAKEUP GELA LAUREL
CLOTHES DKNY
ACCESSORIES STYLIST'S OWN

SNAKE CHARMER. Navy silk dress

Where the wild things are

> *The night Max wore his wolf suit and made his mischief of one kind or another, his mother called him "wild thing!" and Max said, "I'll eat you up!" So he was sent to bed without eating anything.*
> —Maurice Sendak, author of "Where the Wild Things Are"

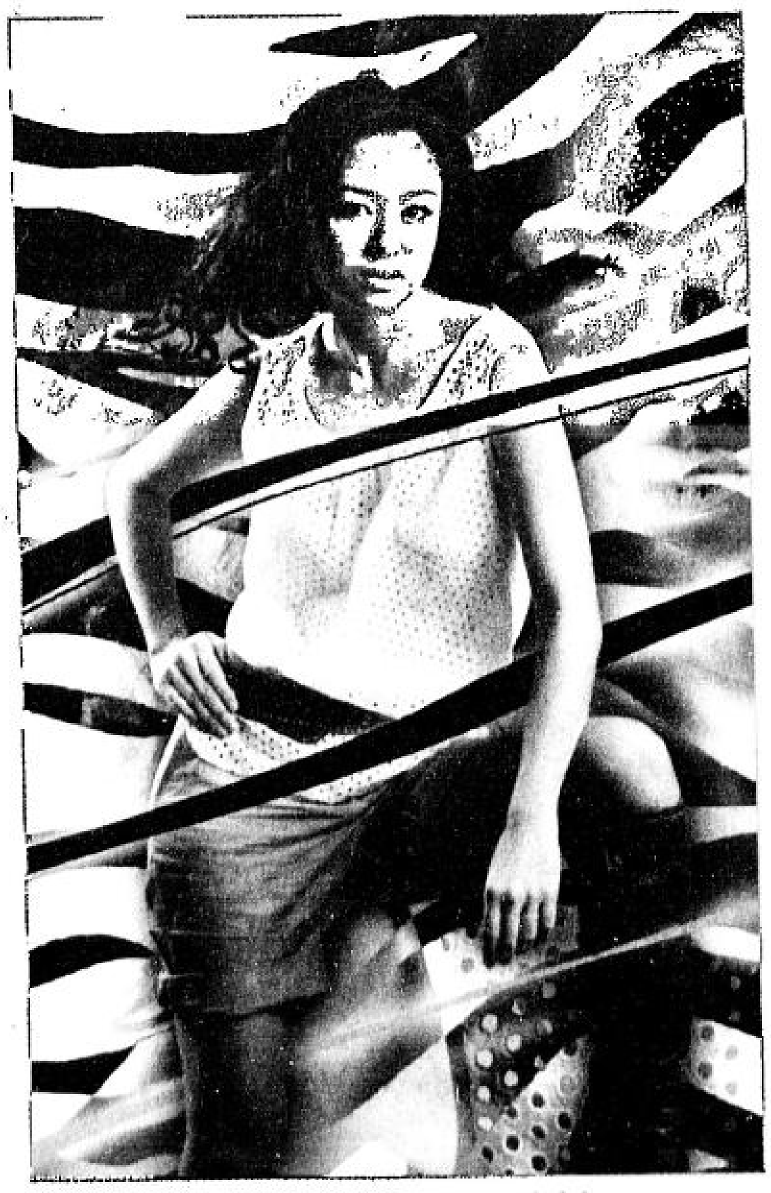
Mabuhay!

Jenni Epperson

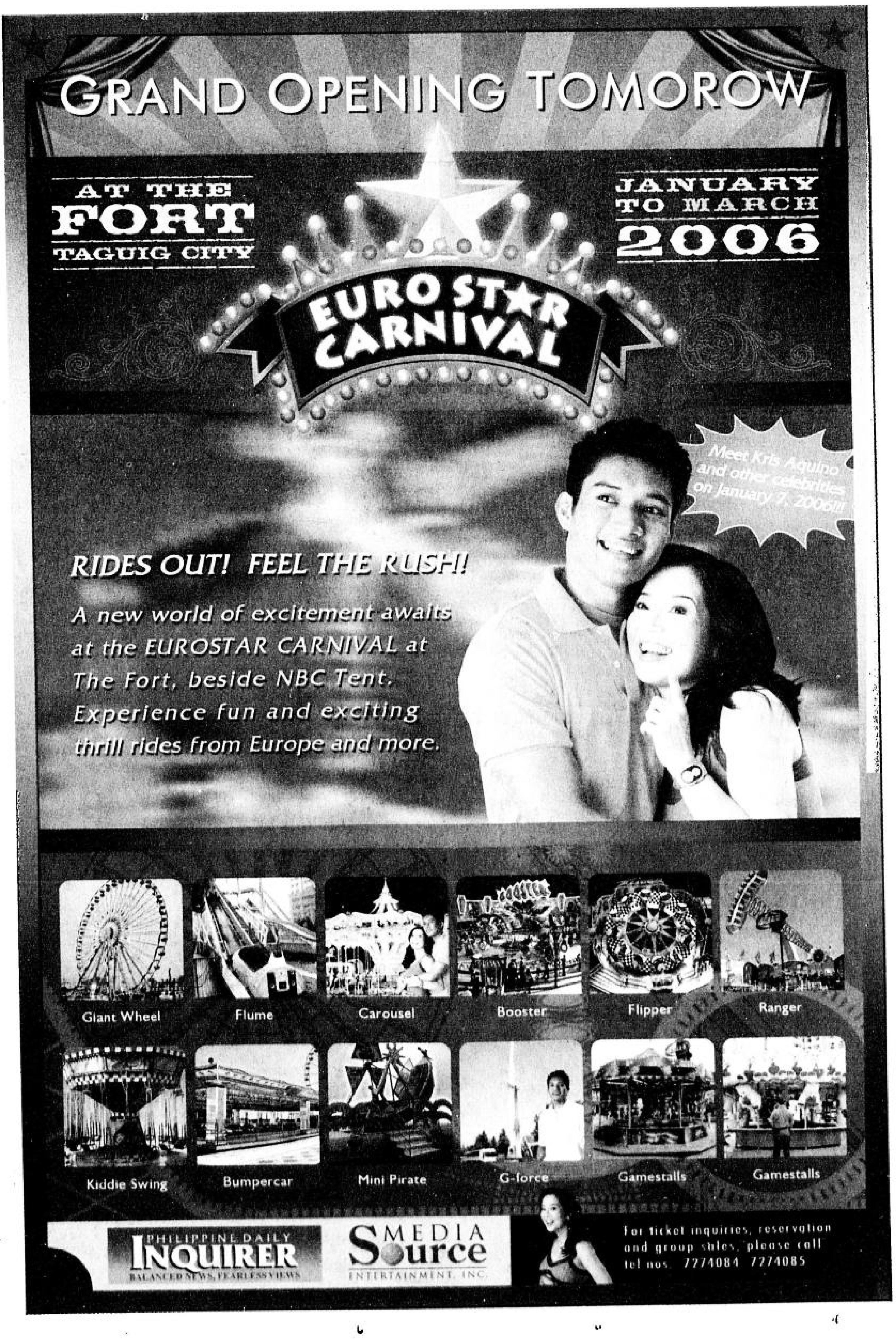
IMPISH ROMPS AND juvenile misbehaviors are the real family jewels. The reckless manner and devil-may-care attitude of adolescents may spawn the growth of white hair among parents and school principals, but despite the dysfunctional and delinquent demeanor of the young, they can inspire the old, err... I mean, mature.

Picture your daughter in hot pants, black turtleneck and fuchsia latex boots dancing at Embassy Club. Or an office newbie wearing her boyfriend's buttoned-down shirt with a wide belt cinched at the waist and white Bermuda shorts. What about the cool *colegiala* in jeans, a "Teenage Millionaire"

WHERE/D2



ANIMAL STREAK. White eyelet top, khaki safari shorts



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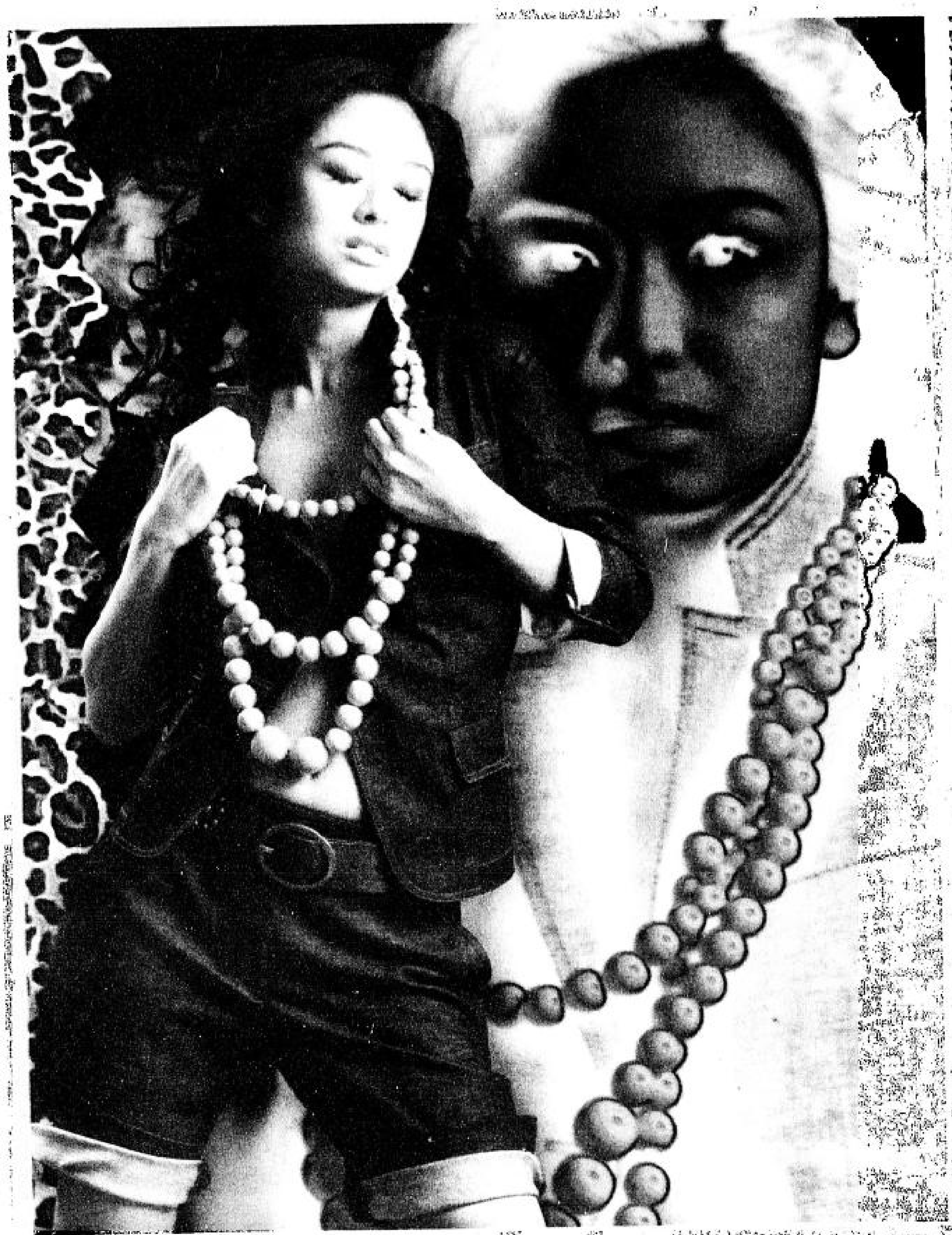

HOT HUNTRESS. Denim blazer and shorts

WILD CARD. White buttery leather coat, coffee floral wallpaper-print tulip skirt

Out of the wilderness and into the metropolis,
DKNY's Spring/Summer collection
ends the hunt for urban jungle gear.

Where the wild things are

From page D1

baby tee and Havaianas?

These dress code offenders can make any guardian's, teacher's or boss' blood boil, enough to have them grounded the whole summer, or be the recipient of a harsh office memo banning the use of *tsinelas*.

Still, the wild, cocky energy and style of these deviant darlings are what many aspire for.

Jungle variety

Like wild boars to tigers, seals to polar bears, DKNY is to the eternally young fashion huntresses. Its designs are young-spirited yet professional-looking, fun yet functional.

DKNY's urban jungle appeal has always quenched the style thirst of lady bosses, the type who takes on protégés, leads by example, clocks in the earliest and leaves the office last. Just like Donna Karan, who took several protégés under her wing as part of her design team, believing that the young designers would continually recharge and inspire her.

For its summer collection, DKNY's jungle variety of tulip skirts, safari shorts and eyelet tops are hot! But, sad to say, the voluminous pieces like the skirts are not for pear-shaped cuties like me, as they will only add lady lumps (that's how Black Eyed Peas calls the female curves) to the hip. The silk dresses, shorts and skinny blazers, though, will surely make up for them.

Max, the king of all wild things

In the classic children's book, "Where the Wild Things Are," Maurice Sendak writes about a young boy named Max who, feeling reckless in his wolf suit, pushes authority to the limit and gets punished for it.

In fashion, it's all about experimenting with different pieces of clothing and pushing the style envelope. Like Max, you may be sent to bed without dinner for your attempts at trying a cut that's a bit edgy. The tulip skirts or voluminous tops may send you back home changing a couple of times, but the rewards are well worth the hassle. You may discover some exciting new style and, even better, find out what works for your body type.

As the spirited little boy says, "Let the wild rumpus start!"

E-mail the author at jfashion@inquirer.com.ph

PHOTOGRAPHY
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DIGITAL IMAGING ARNZ LORENZO (0919-2085558)
MODEL KELLY MISA
HAIR AND MAKEUP GELA LAUREL (0917-5212129)
CLOTHES DKNY, AVAILABLE AT 1/L, POWER PLANT MALL,
ROCKWELL CENTER; 1/F, GREENBELT 4, AYALA CENTER, 2/F,
RUSTAN'S TOWER, MAKATI, AYALA CENTER
ACCESSORIES STYLIST'S OWN

JUNGLE FEVER. Cacao-colored blazer and tulip skirt

Fad hags

We asked some of local fashion's leading lights what they think will fly in 2006

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Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

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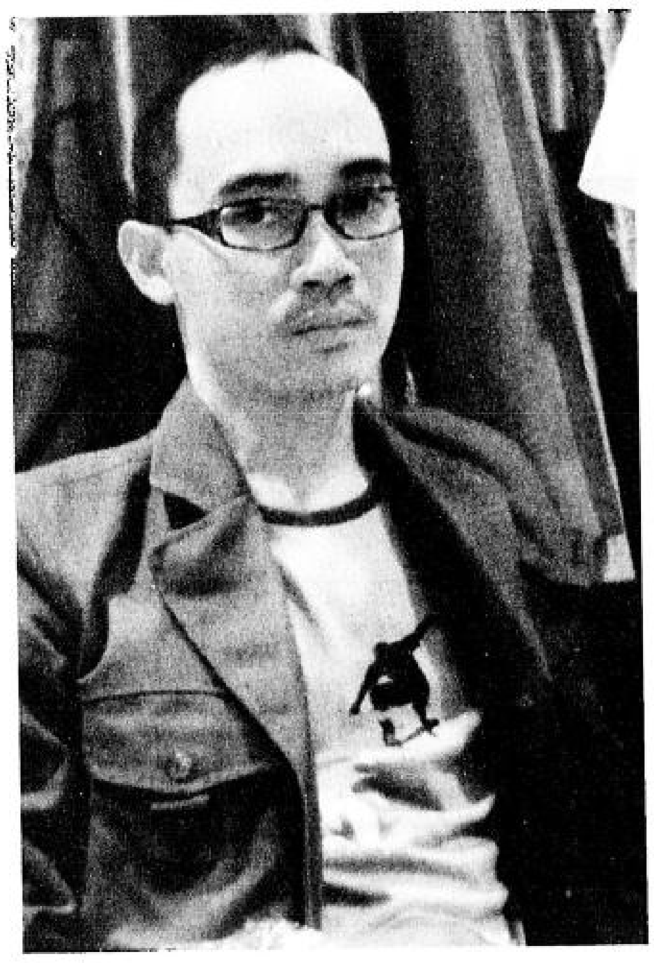

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About the Film:

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"Saint Ange" reveals its dark secrets on January 8, 2006.

(Hollywood Reporter)

Saint Ange's Virginie Ledoyen with Leonardo DiCaprio from her previous film "*The Beach*".

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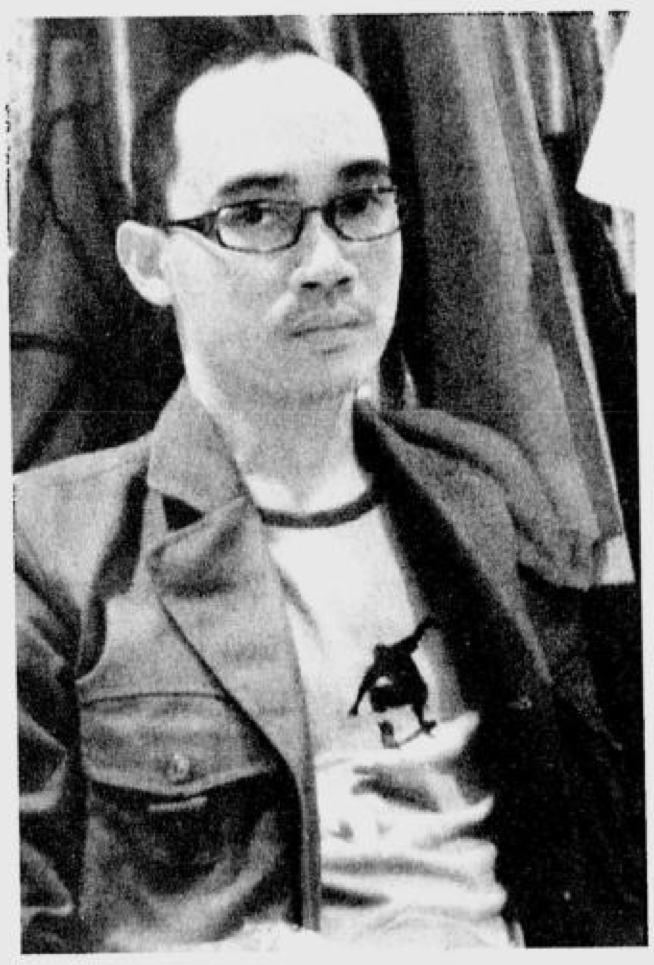

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[Hollywood Reporter]

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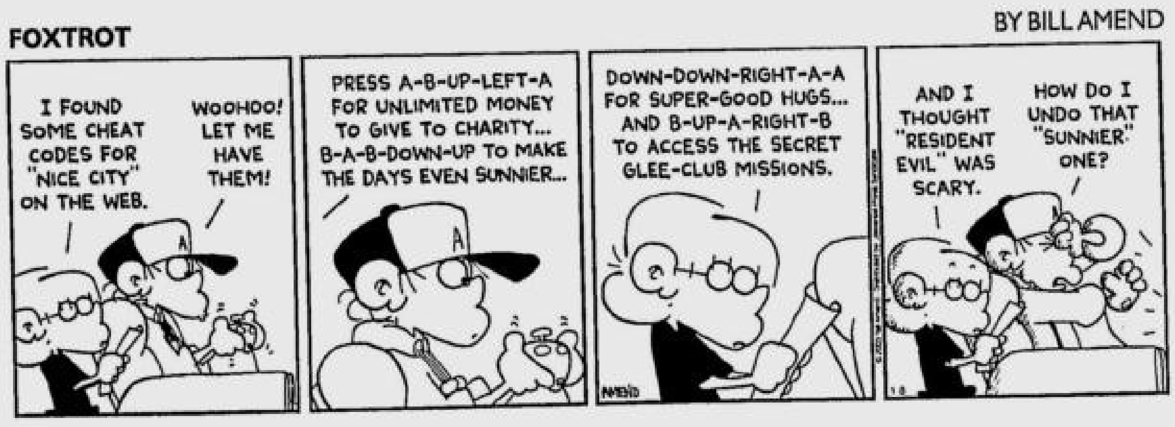
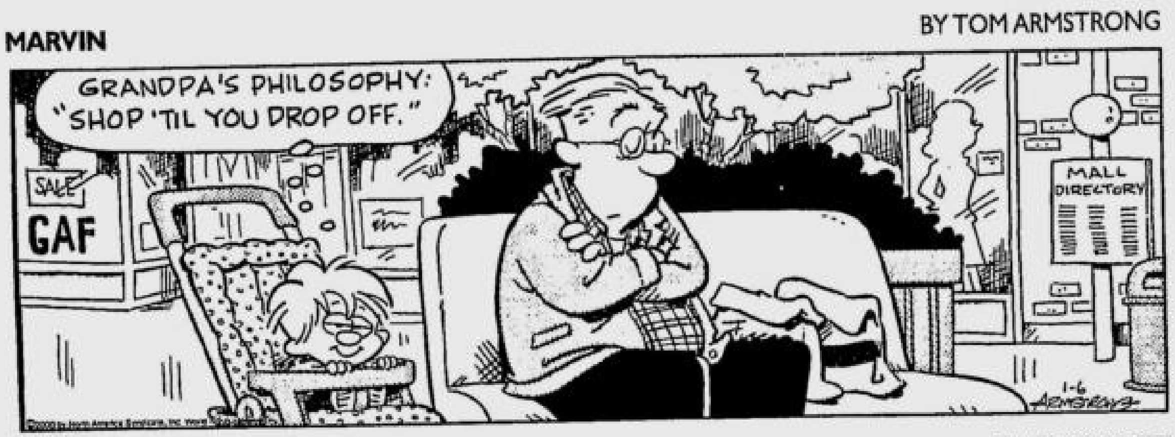
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


I FOUND SOME CHEAT CODES FOR "NICE CITY" ON THE WEB.
WOOHOO! LET ME HAVE THEM!
PRESS A-B-UP-LEFT-A FOR UNLIMITED MONEY TO GIVE TO CHARITY... B-A-B-DOWN-UP TO MAKE THE DAYS EVEN SUNNIER...
DOWN-DOWN-RIGHT-A-A FOR SUPER-GOOD HUGS... AND B-UP-A-RIGHT-B TO ACCESS THE SECRET GLEE-CLUB MISSIONS.
AND I THOUGHT "RESIDENT EVIL" WAS SCARY.
HOW DO I UNDO THAT "SUNNIER" ONE?
AMEND

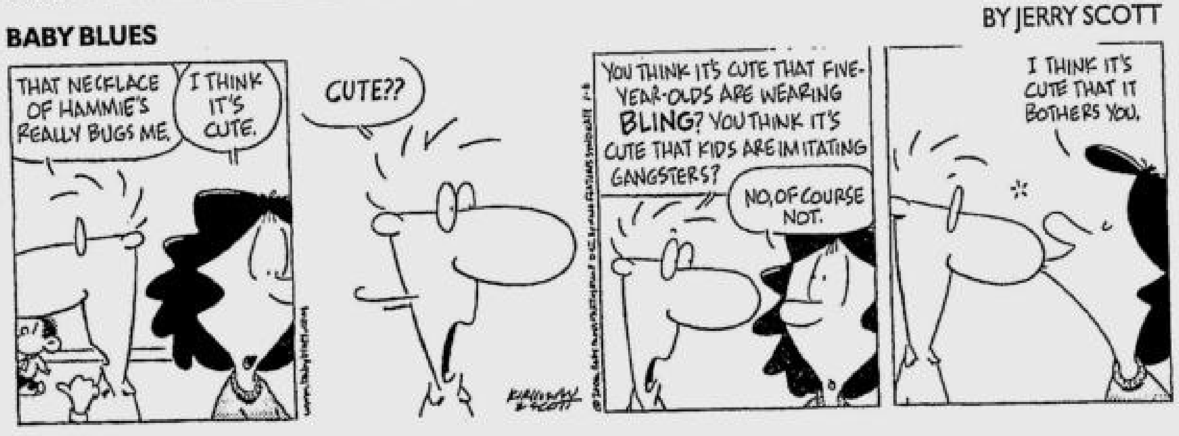
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


GRANDPA'S PHILOSOPHY: "SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP OFF."
SALE
GAF
MALL DIRECTORY
1-6
ARMSTRONG

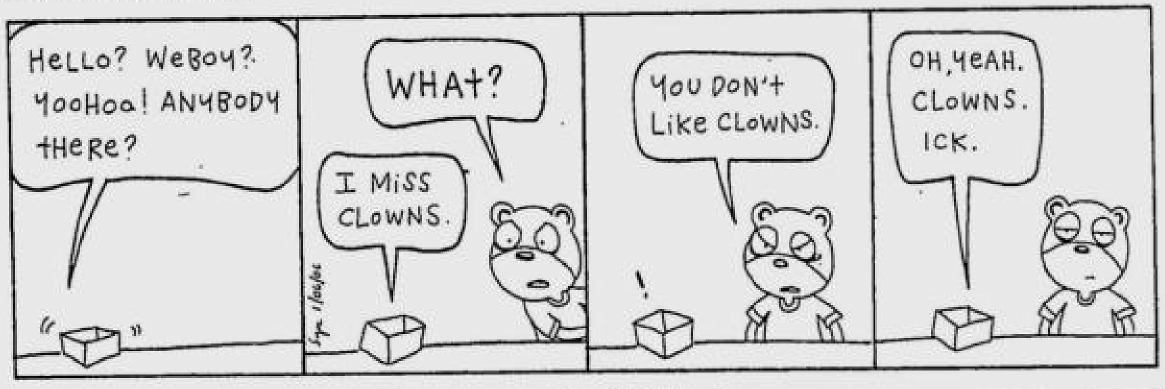
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


THAT NECKLACE OF HAMMIE'S REALLY BUGS ME.
I THINK IT'S CUTE.
CUTE??
YOU THINK IT'S CUTE THAT FIVE-YEAR-OLDS ARE WEARING BLING? YOU THINK IT'S CUTE THAT KIDS ARE IMITATING GANGSTERS?
NO, OF COURSE NOT.
I THINK IT'S CUTE THAT IT BOTHERS YOU.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


HeLLo? WeBoy? YooHoo! ANYBODY tHeRe?
WHAt?
I MiSS CLoWNS.
You DON't Like CLOWNS.
OH, YeAH. CLOWNS. ICK.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are a person who seeks the truth. You do this in your ordinary, everyday life; you also do it philosophically and spiritually. You want the answers to the mysteries of the universe. You're not unrealistic; you simply explore what others often fail to see. The year ahead is social, fun-loving and supportive of relationships. Expect joy and pleasure!

Birthdate of: Rowan Atkinson, comic actor; Nancy Lopez, golfer; Kahlil Gibran, poet.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You want to help a friend today. Perhaps you want to lend your efforts to a group. Do whatever you can to help someone in a way that makes you feel fulfilled and worthwhile.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You're willing to put somebody else's needs before your own today. Your idealism is aroused. You feel useful in giving somebody else (perhaps a parent) a hand.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is a wonderful day to join in any group effort that brings benefit to others. You want to feel that your life makes a difference in the lives of others. Your motivation to do so is all that is necessary.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Don't be modest about your nurturing support for someone. You are a caring person, and this counts for a lot in today's world. (What is more important than kindness?)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Your appreciation of beauty is aroused today. Let yourself enjoy music, art and the accomplishments of others. Your creative soul will sing!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Be sympathetic with co-workers today. If you have an opportunity to help someone, do so. Your caring attitude will be appreciated and perhaps rewarded.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Because you're a people-watcher, you're a natural counselor. Others seek your advice. Today a friend or partner can really benefit from your sympathetic attention.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Your approach to problems at work is highly creative today. You're able to see outside of the box. Trust your intuitive solutions—others need them.

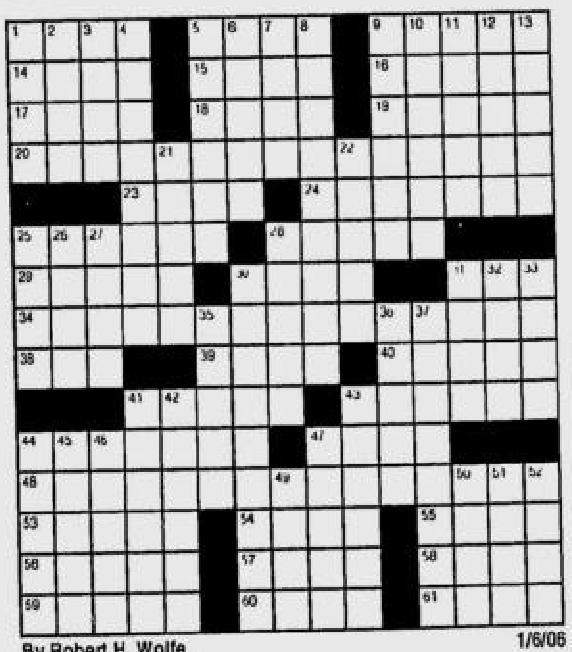
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You love classical knowledge, nature and decency among others. These qualities might let you help children today. Alternatively, you might use your talents in a creative way!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You understand the need for security within the family dynamic. You appreciate tradition. Look for opportunities to help family members today. You can make a difference.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Your sign always wants to make the world a better place. Talk to others and network with people to find out how to do this. Help a sibling if you can.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You're tempted to spend money on something quite luxurious today. If you can afford it, do it. (We all love our precious darlings.)

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Robert H. Wolfe
North Woodmere, NY

1/6/06

ACROSS
1 Did the backstroke
5 __ Spumante
9 Sequence of eight
14 Country singer McCann
15 Fly high
16 Series starter
17 Spot
18 Emulate Persians
19 Inventor Howe
20 One of the 5 Ws
23 Forearm bone
24 Ivy supporter
25 Useful things
28 Wicked one
29 More tricky
30 Lilt
31 Lawyers' grp.
34 Lacked
38 She sheep
39 Has to pay
40 Doctor, often
41 Pitcher McLain
43 City of "Two Gentlemen"
44 Green liqueur
47 Delta material
48 Dreyfuss title role
53 Main artery
54 Sch. with a Berkeley campus
55 Moises or Felipe of baseball
56 Use a broom
57 California valley
58 Actress Campbell
59 Hagar the Horrible's dog
60 Tied
61 Darn!

DOWN
1 Did in
2 Desire
3 Mutt's meal
4 Girl chosen for a spring festival
5 Quaking trees
6 The March King
7 Small pie
8 Vexing things
9 Unfolded
10 In a sedate manner
11 Court action
12 Video-game pioneer company
13 Flat plates
21 Extremist
22 Sequence
25 Late great tennis player
26 Sandwich side
27 Lateral part
28 Gary of "Point Break"
30 Connected home
31 Chan's words
32 Has-__
33 Gillette shaver
35 Sophia Loren's Carlo
36 "Island of the Blue Dolphins" author
37 Rose Festival city
41 Middle manager?
42 Thrilled
43 One of the strings
44 Collect
45 Ivy League school
46 Fling
47 Bring dishonor to
49 604, to some
50 Yankee or Oriole, briefly
51 Classic Chevy model
52 Song for a couple

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

C	O	S	E	C		D	I	D	O		L	A	O	S
C	R	U	R	A		E	D	E	N		U	G	L	I
L	O	P	E	S		M	Y	F	O	R	M	U	L	A
E	N	E		S	M	I	L	E		I	B	E	A	M
F	O	R		O	A	S		N	A	M	E			
		S	U	C	C	E	S	S	I	S	R	I	S	E
B	L	A	N	K	S		A	E	S			N	U	N
L	I	V	E	S		C	B	S		M	A	C	R	O
U	S	E			A	L	E		P	E	T	R	E	L
E	A	R	L	Y	W	O	R	K	L	A	T	E		
			I	A	N	S		E	I	N		A	N	D
A	S	I	A	N		E	L	L	E	N		S	O	O
S	T	R	I	K	E	O	I	L		E	M	I	R	S
T	A	O	S		L	U	R	E		S	E	N	S	E
A	N	N	E		S	T	A	R		S	A	G	E	S

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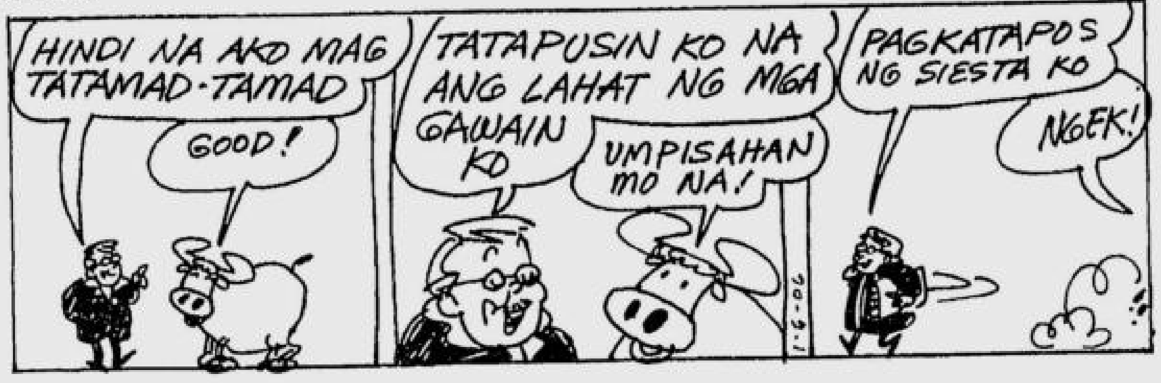
1/6/06

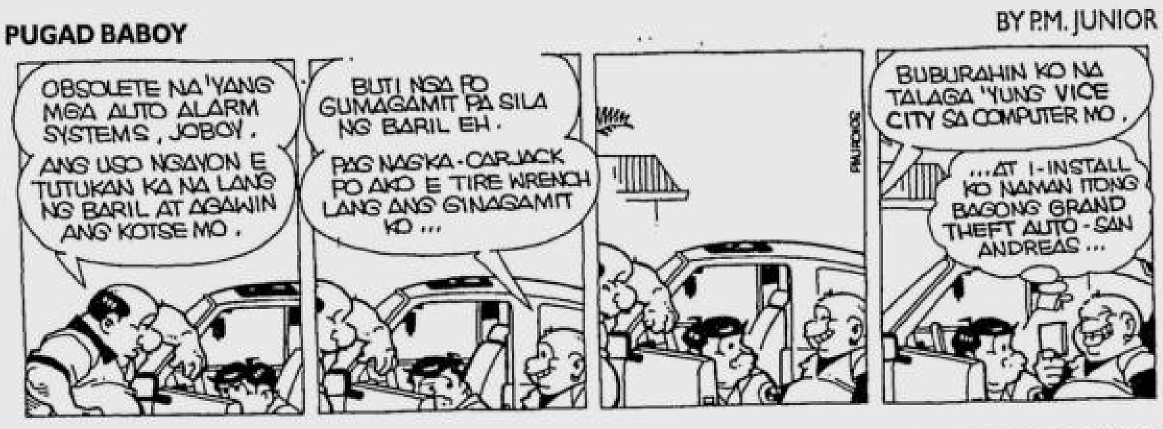
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


HINDI NA AKO MAG TATAMAD-TAMAD
GOOD!
TATAPUSIN KO NA ANG LAHAT NG MGA GAWAIN KO
UMPISAHAN MO NA!
PAGKATAPOS NG SIESTA KO
NGEK!
1-6-06

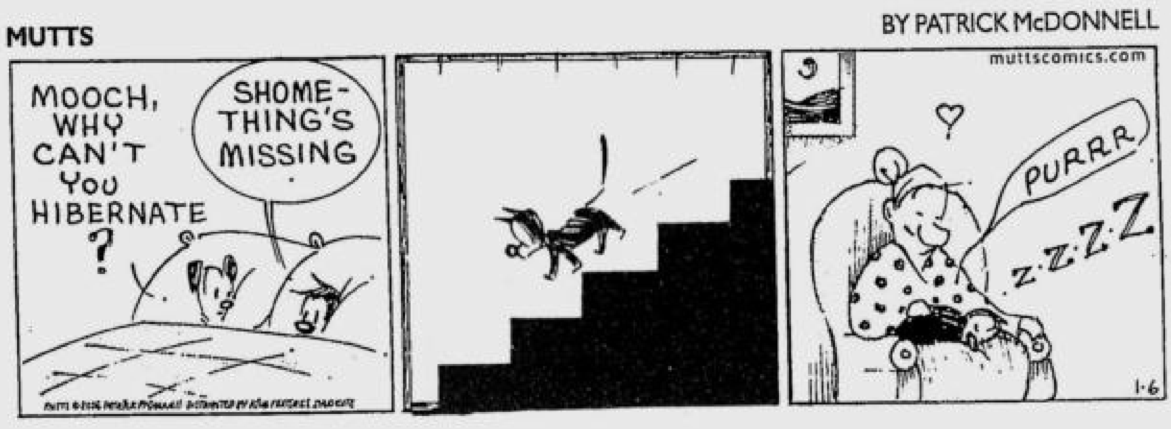
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


OBSOLETE NA 'YANG MGA AUTO ALARM SYSTEMS, JOBOY.
ANG USO NGAYON E TUTUKAN KA NA LANG NG BARIL AT AGAWIN ANG KOTSE MO.
BUTI NGA PO GUMAGAMIT PA SILA NG BARIL EH.
PAG NAGKA-CARJACK PO AKO E TIRE WRENCH LANG ANG GINAGAMIT KO...
BUBURAHIN KO NA TALAGA 'YUNG VICE CITY SA COMPUTER MO.
...AT I-INSTALL KO NAMAN ITONG BAGONG GRAND THEFT AUTO-SAN ANDREAS...

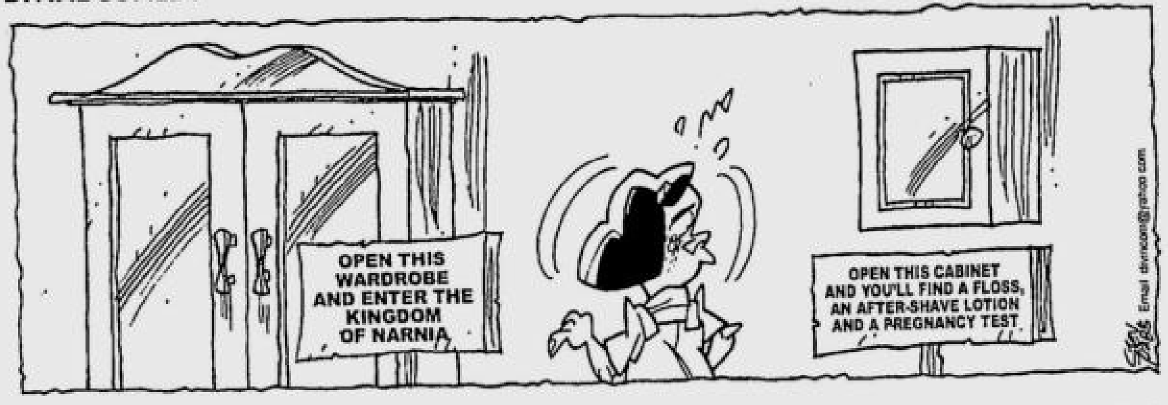
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


mutts comics.com
MOOCH, WHY CAN'T YOU HIBERNATE ?
SHOME-THING'S MISSING
PURRR
Z·Z·Z·Z
1-6

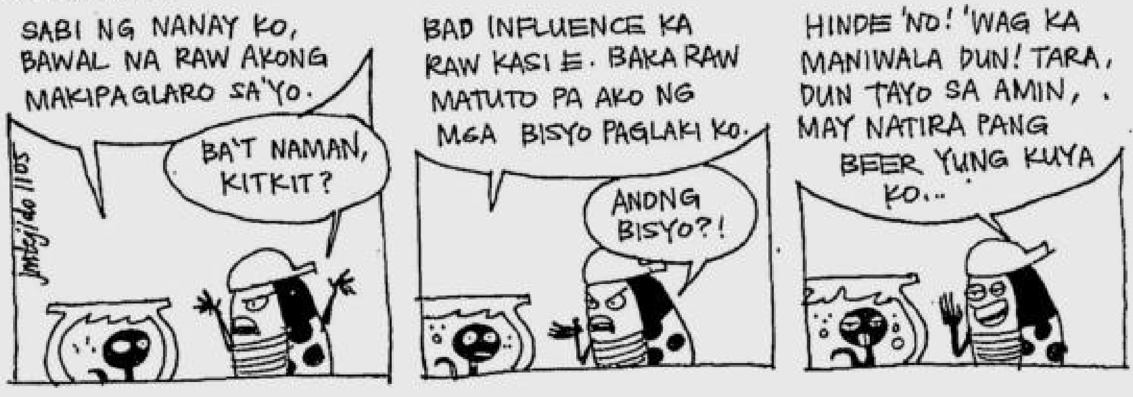
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


OPEN THIS WARDROBE AND ENTER THE KINGDOM OF NARNIA
OPEN THIS CABINET AND YOU'LL FIND A FLOSS, AN AFTER-SHAVE LOTION AND A PREGNANCY TEST
Email divinecom@yahoo.com

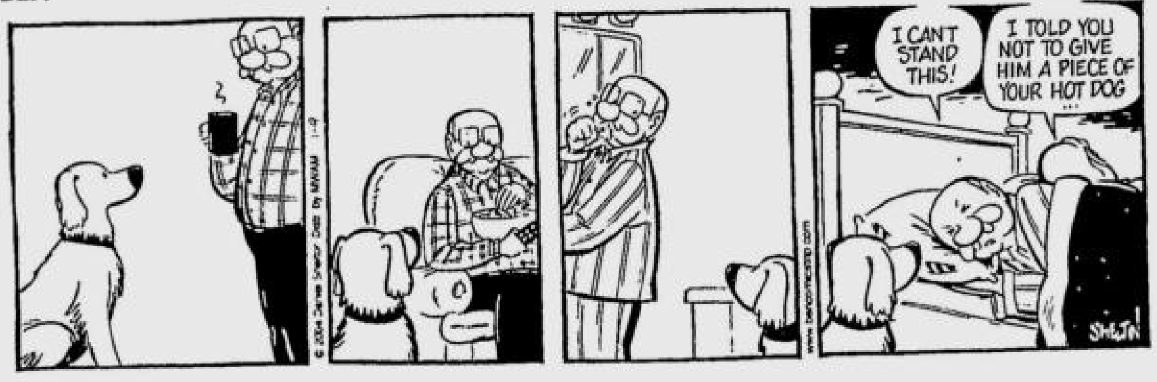
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


SABI NG NANAY KO, BAWAL NA RAW AKONG MAKIPAGLARO SA'YO.
BA'T NAMAN, KITKIT?
BAD INFLUENCE KA RAW KASI E. BAKA RAW MATUTO PA AKO NG MGA BISYO PAGLAKI KO.
ANONG BISYO?!
HINDE 'NO! 'WAG KA MANIWALA DUN! TARA, DUN TAYO SA AMIN, MAY NATIRA PANG BEER YUNG KUYA KO...
jmtejido 11 05

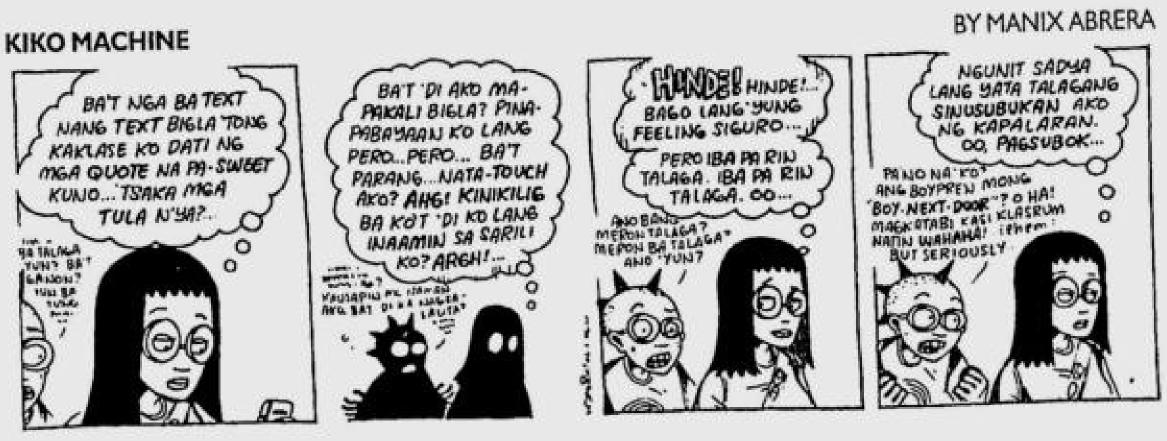
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


I CAN'T STAND THIS!
I TOLD YOU NOT TO GIVE HIM A PIECE OF YOUR HOT DOG
SHELTON

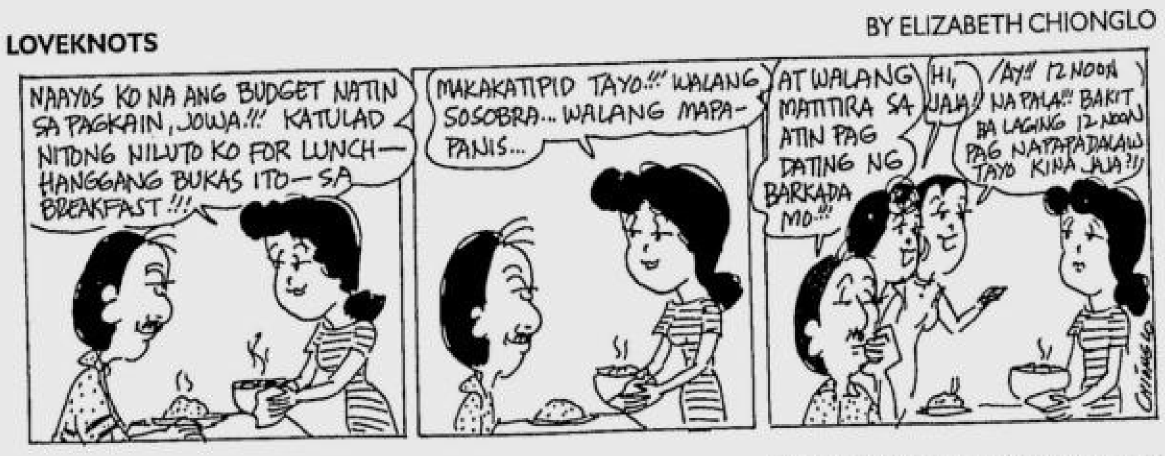
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


BA'T NGA BA TEXT NANG TEXT BIGLA 'TONG KAKLASE KO DATI NG MGA QUOTE NA PA-SWEET KUNO... 'TSAKA MGA TULA N'YA?..
BA'T 'DI AKO MA-PAKALI BIGLA? PINA-PABAYAAN KO LANG PERO...PERO... BA'T PARANG...NATA-TOUCH AKO? AHG! KINIKILIG BA KO'T 'DI KO LANG INAAMIN SA SARILI KO? ARGH!...
HINDE! HINDE!... BAGO LANG 'YUNG FEELING SIGURO...
PERO IBA PA RIN TALAGA. IBA PA RIN TALAGA. OO...
ANO BA? MERON TALAGA? MERON BA TALAGA ANO 'YUN?
NGUNIT SADYA LANG YATA TALAGANG SINUSUBUKAN AKO NG KAPALARAN. OO, PAGSUBOK...
PANO NA 'KO? ANG BOYPREN MONG "BOY-NEXT-DOOR"? O HA! MAGKATABI KASI KLASRUM NATIN WAHAHA! IEHEM! BUT SERIOUSLY

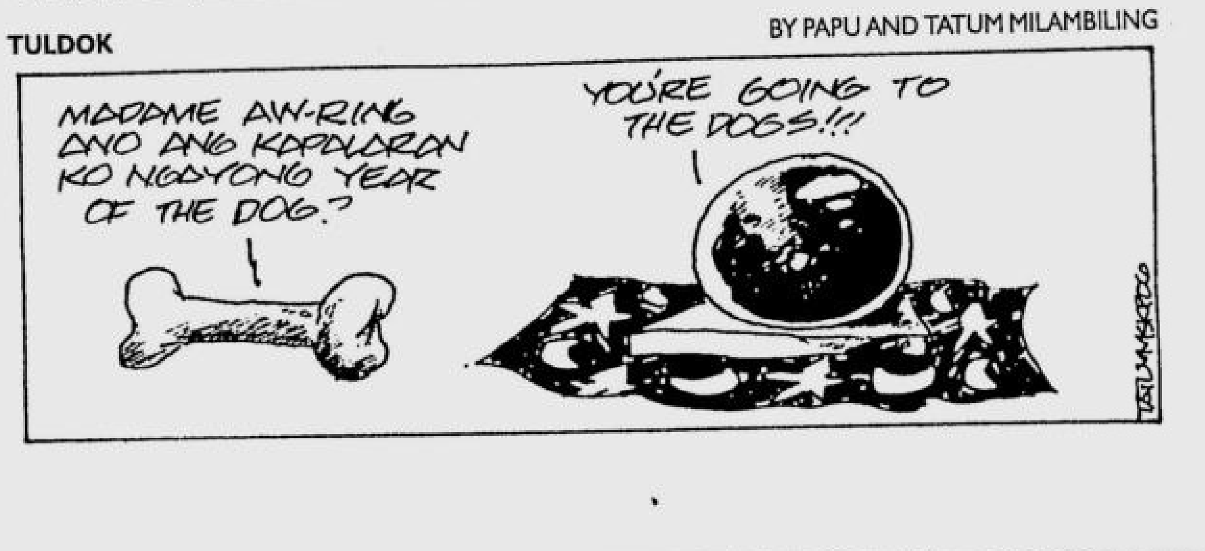
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


NAAYOS KO NA ANG BUDGET NATIN SA PAGKAIN, JOWA!!! KATULAD NITONG NILUTO KO FOR LUNCH— HANGGANG BUKAS ITO—SA BREAKFAST!!!
MAKAKATIPID TAYO!!! WALANG SOSOBRA... WALANG MAPA-PANIS...
AT WALANG MATITIRA SA ATIN PAG DATING NG BARKADA MO!!!
HI, JAJA!
AY!! 12 NOON NA PALA!! BAKIT BA LAGING 12 NOON PAG NAPAPADALAW TAYO KINA JAJA?!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


MADAME AW-RING ANO ANG KAPALARAN KO NGAYONG YEAR OF THE DOG?
YOU'RE GOING TO THE DOGS!!!
TATUMKAPOG

Lip-smackin' good!

Let your pout do the talking

KNOCKOUT!

Ria Francisco-Prieto

I STILL VIVIDLY REMEMBER the first time I applied lipstick. I was only five. It was my mother's. She had gone out for a party and left it on her dresser. When I saw it there, I was so excited. Of course, I ended up looking like a clown because I spread it on half my face. But I felt really pretty and grown up.

At the age of 13, I was at my best friend Trissa's house for my first sleepover, and she told me that if I wanted to have red lips that looked natural the whole day, I should sleep with coats of lipstick on. I followed her advice and woke up with chapped lips.

And in high school, before a class picture, Trissa had snuck in a tube of lipstick, and so she pulled me aside to share her beauty arsenal.

These days, I know women who won't go anywhere without lipstick.

Lipstick is one of the first cosmetics a girl would try on. It has also been around the longest, I would presume. Remember the Egyptians using henna on their lips? At that time, it wasn't the smartest thing to do since it was a reddish purple mercuric plant dye that was potentially poisonous. Talk about the kiss of death!

Today, there are a variety of products made for every lip type. Lipstick contains a variety of ingredients, such as moisturizers, vitamin E, aloe vera, collagen, amino acids and sunscreen.

The extra components keep lips soft, moist and protected from the elements. The most basic component is the lip balm. Then comes a variety of lippies: frosted, mattes, sheer, stains, gloss, tint, and long-lasting colors.

Even the packaging has evolved. We now have tubes, palettes and pots aside from the stick form that we are so familiar with.

Luscious lips will never go out of fashion. From old Hollywood's Marilyn Monroe to new A-list stars such as Angelina Jolie's, puckered lips are the rage. Shades may vary from person to person, but using just one shade all the time would be a big no-no. The louder the color, the more intense the look.

Red gives off a womanly appeal; pink is very feminine; and nudes can be sexy if applied with the right eye shadow to complement it.

To make your lippie stay, make sure that before you apply any tint, your lips are well-moisturized. If you have dry lips, you may buff them with the use of a wet soft toothbrush. Then apply balm or lip conditioner.

Line lips with a lip liner that is closest to your tube's shade. It is best to apply lipstick with a brush because it allows you to apply just the right amount; it also allows you to shape your lips well. If you want that extra pout or luster, apply gloss right after.

Among the newest lippies, I truly love Smashbox's Troubadour Fairy Lipgloss Set from their White Nights collection, which comes in a white leather flap container that holds three awesome shades plus a lip liner. This is a definite must-try and must-share! The shades are so different from one another that if you have White Nights, you don't need to buy more shades.

I also love Lancôme's Juicy Bar celebration set. It contains three best-selling shades—strawberry, peach and grapefruit—plus one limited-edition shade, which is a sparkly gold.

Looking at this tube reminds me of the disco! It is so fun and sparkly it will definitely enhance that shade you love. It is f-a-b!

Juicy Tubes is Lancôme's best-selling tube. Lancome sells 11 tubes per minute around the world! I am not surprised why.

Now that you are more knowledgeable about lipstick, be on the lookout for what would be best for you!

Photography Mark Nicdao
for Edge of Light 0921-6005175
Makeup
Steven Doloso 0916-3748046
Hair
Barney Aguilar 0915-9007884
Styling Ria Francisco-Prieto
Model Ornusa Cadnes

E-mail me at rbeauty@inquirer.com.ph

JUICY Tubes in strawberry

Barbi girl

Popular makeup wiz and makeover maven Barbi Chan shares her expert tips and tricks for a gorgeous face all year long

By Giselle Go
Contributor

WHEREVER MAKEUP ARTIST Barbi Chan goes, a palpable energy seems to follow her. Chalk this up to her quasi-fame as an ubiquitous name in all the major local glossies, where her brush has done its magic to create flashbulb-ready faces for celebrities like Heart Evangelista, Bea Alonzo and Kristine Hermosa.

Or maybe it's her frenetic, cheeky personality that seems to win over even the most difficult of clients. And hers is a roster that's packed with grateful clients with gorgeous, impeccable makeup. "I am fascinated with what makeup can do," says Chan. "It can give such great pleasure and beauty to women when it's done right."

Barbi has been in the makeup biz for two and a half years, after studying makeup in Los Angeles at Makeup Designory and the Dinair Airbrush Institute. Her first gig was doing makeup at a shoot for Preview magazine, and her schedule hasn't lightened up since.

A slot in her Palm Pilot is highly coveted. As it is, it's already filled to the brim with various appointments for fashion shoots, weddings, advertising jobs, and makeup stints for Maybelline, the US cosmetics brand for which she has become the first-ever Filipina makeup consultant.

"Doing makeovers is immensely gratifying for me," she says. "People can be too critical of themselves, so they need someone to help bring out and see the beauty in themselves."

"Makeup can be transformative—and I'm not just talking about its aesthetic value. When people look good, they feel good. I'm thrilled when clients thank me for doing their makeup. It makes me happy to know that I've helped them feel good about themselves."

Here, Chan shares her expert tips and tricks for a gorgeous face all year long.

If you can't afford a professional makeover, what are some beauty tricks you can do by yourself at home?

"Changing your hair color can give that perfect, extra oomph to your look. I love those shampoos with hair color in their formula. They're fun, low pressure, and best of all, easy to use. It's only temporary so mistakes are easily remedied and it's gentler on the hair than salon color. I would suggest sticking to colors nearest your own. A shade or two lighter can really brighten up the face.

"For makeup, I always encourage experimenting with different colors. There are a lot of inexpensive makeup brands available on the market so you don't need to spend so much. Try having your eyebrows groomed professionally one time, then you can just follow the pattern and tweeze on your own when the hair grows back. Eyebrows are important because they frame the face. An easy tool to use is colorless mascara to keep brows in place."

What are five essential items we must have in our makeup bags?

"No. 1 is lipstick or gloss. I wouldn't be caught dead without a hint of color on my lips because this brightens up the face. Plus it can prevent lips from chapping. Another is concealer. This is very important because it evens out the skin tone and can give you a wide-awake, fresh look. Tweezers are also a must, because eyebrows should always be perfectly groomed. Also, I never go out without sunblock. The higher the SPF, the better. You don't need much makeup if you have good skin, and the best way to take care of your skin is to protect it from the No. 1 cause of aging, the sun. Lastly, an eyeliner is always good to have in your bag. Whether it's black, brown, or colored, it can make eyes look alive and bigger. It's natural yet noticeable. I don't even wear eye shadow so much because the liner is enough."

What are five products you should try this year?

- Awake Vitamin C Serum. I absolutely love this because it makes the skin glow.
- Cernor eye cream. I swear by this!
- Maybelline Dream Matte Mousse. It's so light and sheer, it feels like second skin.
- Model Co. airbrush moisturizer. If you don't like the greasy feeling of regular moisturizers, this is the perfect alternative.
- Shu Uemura blushers. They can be a little pricey, but they're definitely worth it.

What are five beauty-related things you should try in 2006?

"First, get bangs. Ask your stylist to have a variety of lengths cut around your face to make the bangs look softer. This can take years off your face. Another thing to try is a tretinoin or glycolic facial. It sloughs off dead skin to make the skin look younger. You can also try perming or straightening your hair (expect to spend a lot on hair treatments though). It's always fun to change and try new looks with your hair. Next would be to use a tanning lotion. Everybody wants to be white. Why not try tan instead? It looks healthier and sexier! Lastly, try wearing muted, matte lipstick. 2005 was all about gloss and shine. I think 2006 will be just the opposite. Everything is going to be muted and subdued. Beige is a good color for lips, and with minimal shine, it looks more natural."

What's the one difficult thing you face when doing makeovers?

"People are so afraid of change. They tend to stick to what they've always been doing. But what may have looked fab five years ago may look outdated now. Sometimes it's hard to convince them to cut their hair, trim their eyebrows or try a new color. They're so used to what they believe works for them that a new look or new idea can seem threatening. But you'll be surprised at how a little change can go a long way. Just trying a different shade of lipstick or eye shadow can really make a huge difference."

Stunningly natural

Going neutral in your makeup doesn't mean you have to look blank and boring

By Barbi Chan
Contributor

NATURAL OR NEUTRAL makeup will never go out of style. It is the most fundamental element of any makeup wardrobe, since it goes with anything and won't compete or overpower your jewelry or outfit.

But just because neutral is basic doesn't mean you have to look blank and boring. In fact, neutrals allow your face to be seen as it is. While not overly done, you can still look polished.

Eyes: I always use sand or chestnut colors. These are my staples. Other colors I like are toffee, tan, ivory, beige, camel, chocolate and sable. Try Bobbi Brown's eye shadows. The brand has a wonderful array of neutral-colored eye shadows.

Blush: Blush doesn't always have to be pink. Neutrals can work just as well. A neutral blush will blend just as well with your skin tone. This is not for sculpting your cheeks but more to give you that healthy look. Try Shu Uemura in Amber, which is very sheer and adapts flawlessly to your skin color.

BEFORE

Lips: What is your natural lip color? If it is on the pinkish side, then use colors that will complement your lips. You want people to think you are not wearing any lipstick. L'Oreal Glam Shine in Sweet Nude is the most natural lipstick I've tried. It just mimics my natural lip color.

Always remember to keep the coverage of your skin as transparent as possible. Don't put too much foundation. If you want to be bolder, add a hint of bright color to your eyeliner or lips, then blend well.

AFTER: Naturally enchanting look

MAKEUP BARBI CHAN 09178460738
MODEL DENISE MONTECILLO

Beauty spotlight

Lifestyle Beauty's December 23 cover model Cristina Garcia will be back in town from Australia on Jan. 16. She has graced the most prestigious magazine covers in the Philippines and is certainly one of the most beautiful product endorsers ever. Welcome back, Cristina! You are truly irreplaceable!

BEAUTY
smashbox

Contributing Editor Ria Francisco-Prieto

First dibs!

SMASHBOX [illegible] Lipgloss Set from the [illegible] collection.

Start the year by saving

MAKEOVER 911

Kinny Salas

HAPPY NEW YEAR, DEAR readers! How broke are you? I am avoiding the malls so as not to spend much. The thought of my forthcoming credit card bill with my Christmas purchases still gives me goose bumps. This article will contain useful beauty information instead of road-tested products so you do not get the urge to spend for beauty products—at least for this week.

Repair time

The most important time for your skin to repair itself is between 11 p.m. and 4 a.m. It is beneficial to be asleep during this time as the skin will cooperate with your beauty products to give maximum results. This is why people who work the night.shift look older and more tired than those who get to sleep properly during the night even if both get the right amount of sleep.

The most potent product in your beauty routine is usually the third step. Often, this is called the serum, treatment or essence. It is used after the cleanser and toner; it is applied underneath the moisturizer or sun block.

Peggy Cheng of Clarins shared her beauty secret with us. Cheng said that all one needs are cleanser, toner, moisturizer and eye cream, but she uses as much as seven essences to answer her skin's multiple needs.

I personally use two or three treatments underneath my moisturizer. I use whitening to even out the skin tone on my face and neck, a firming essence to prevent my skin from sagging and stimulate collagen production, and an antioxidant serum to prevent wrinkles and counteract the ravages of time.

If I have an acne breakout, I use Tretinoin right after my toner then pile up the other essences over it. One should always treat the acne first.

My evening moisturizer is usually a firming one or one for whitening. My day moisturizer is always sun block of SPF 30 and up.

By the way, these serums absorb into the skin right away so there is no necessary waiting period when applying one over the other. It takes me a split second between applications.

Soap and water are not sufficient for removing makeup. I was shocked to find out that a lot of people my age still do this then blame the makeup for giving them bad skin.

Cleanse thoroughly

I love makeup and put them on as often as I can but I am also as fanatical about cleansing thoroughly. A lot of these color cosmetics are wax-based and/or highly pigmented and need something emollient (slippery or greasy) to lift them off.

Makeup removers are often called names with the word "cleansing" before them like cold cream, lotion and my personal favorite, cleansing oil. They all work equally well.

Those with acne or very greasy skin will love the texture of gel cleansers for removing makeup. It lifts everything off without even the temporary greasy feel and leaves your oily skin matte but soft and smooth to the touch.

When I was younger, whenever I ran out of a makeup cleanser, I used body lotion and it worked equally well. Those with sensitive skin should not risk this too often, though, because the formulation on the body does not take into account the gentler skin of the face.

Of course, the cleansing of makeup is just step one. One should follow with the toner to remove extra debris, and then with the treatments, moisturizer and eye cream.

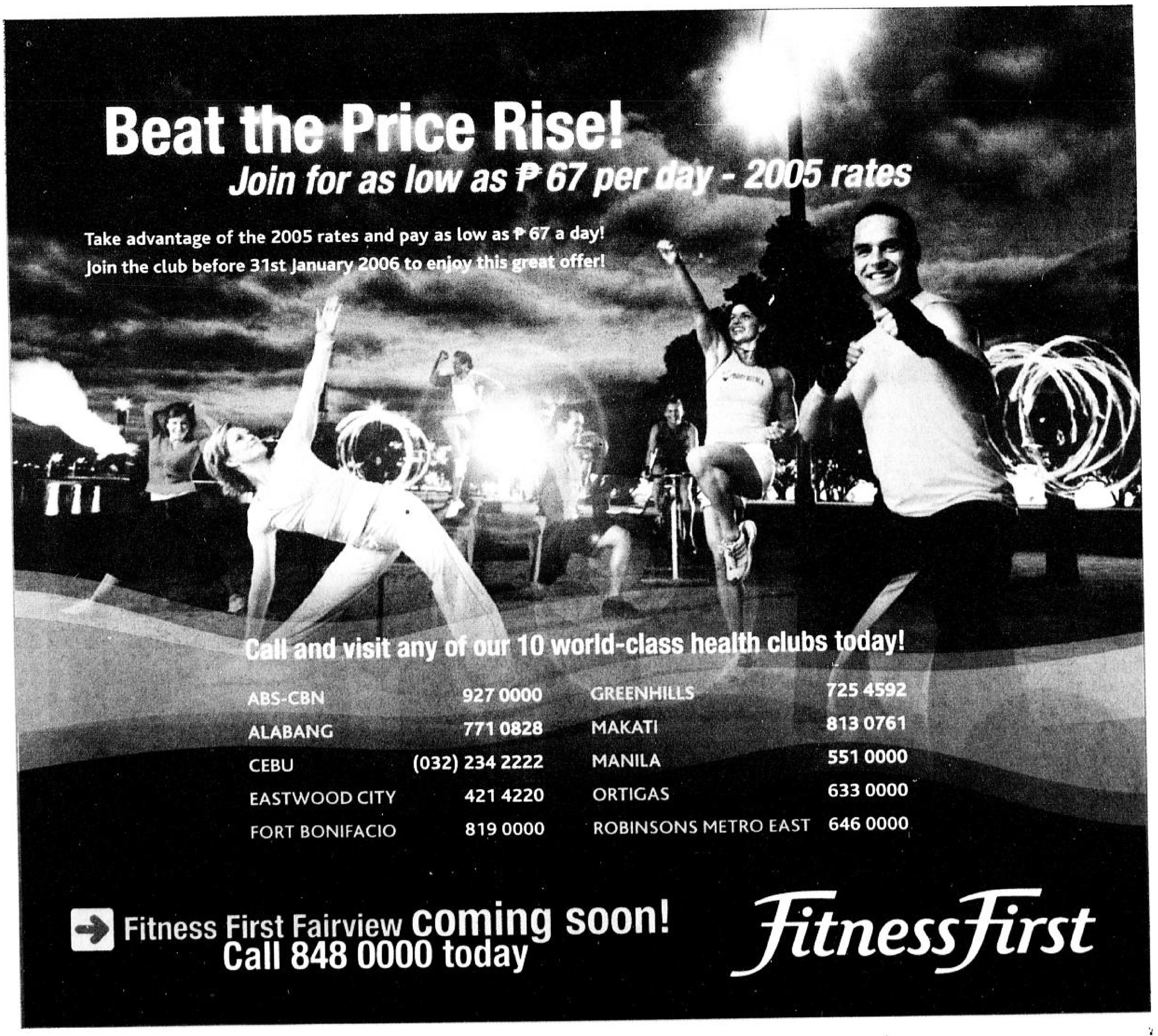
My experience with cold cream, though, is that after wiping it off and rinsing with water, it still leaves this waxy residue. I still felt the need to double-cleanse with a foaming cleanser, then follow with the rest of the routine.

I started using eye cream and moisturizer when I was already in my thirties. Sounds criminal, I know, but my greasy skin broke out with the lightest of moisturizers and I got milia (hard whiteheads) around my eyes when I used eye cream before those years. Moisturizers only came in handy for me when I was abroad in really cold weather.

What I am trying to say is: There are different rules in product usage for everyone. Sometimes when your skin does not feel or show the need for a certain product, you may skip it. The rule applies: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!"

I purposely did not name any products and show photos for this article so you can make do with what you already have at home and not have the urge to spend extra.

E-mail the author at kinnysalas@yahoo.com



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